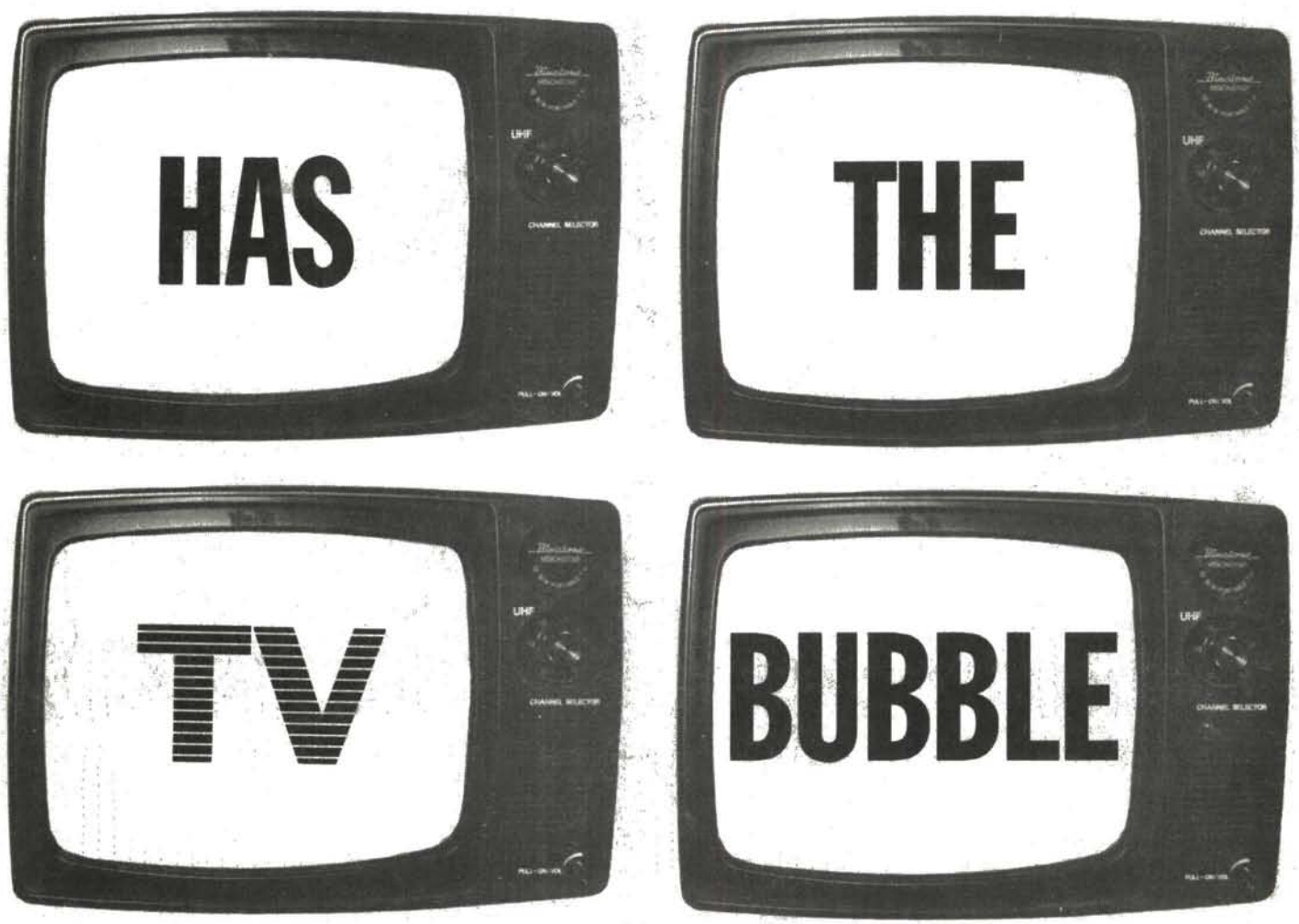
New Statesman

8 April 1983 65p IR£1.00 US$1.50 By Air



PLUS: Easter on Greenham Common ● Mrs Gandhi's problems ● Animal, vegetable or human

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New Statesman

New Statesman
14-16 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU
Tel: 01-253 2001
Editorial: 01-253 2003
Telex: 28449
Cables: Newstat, London EC1
©1983 Statesman & Nation Publishing Company Ltd and contributors
Published and distributed by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Company Ltd

Subscriptions: Lesley Bridgmount, Cecilia Papadopoulos
Circulation: Liz Cooper, Tim Freeman
Display advertisements: Michael Roberts 01-253 2001
Classified advertisements: Laura Berryman, Stephen Mitchell 01-251 5487

Subscription Rates
Surface mail:
UK £29, Overseas £32
Air mail:
Europe £36, Middle East £39, Africa, India, South America £40, Australasia, Far East £45, USA $79, Canada $92

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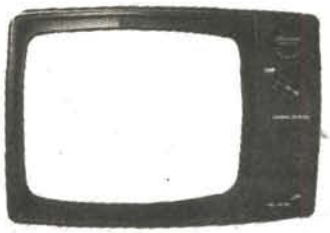

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New Statesman Vol 105 No 2716 8 April 1983

Time to clear the decks

'THIS CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT . . . will . . . provide the basis for the manifesto to be presented to the British people at the next election'. The words are from Michael Foot's foreword to *Labour's Plan – the New Hope for Britain*, published last week. From the point of view of political impact, a great deal is going to depend on what gets left in and what gets left out. For last week's document is a political hold-all, jammed full of practically everything that anyone on any of the host of Labour Party and TUC policy committees and sub-committees has managed to think of over the past year. Almost every single one of the ideas contained in it can be politically and intellectually justified. But lumping them all into a single document is not the same thing as deciding on a sensible, or politically effective, strategy for keeping out the Tories at the next general election.

The plan, in short, is not so much a campaign document, more a discussion paper, designed to be the basis of a socialist programme stretching over a decade and more. Despite the brave prose and the claim that the document is a five-year programme there is no way in which all, or even most, of the proposals could be achieved, or even substantially advanced in the lifetime of a single Parliament. The essential question is what use the Labour Party should make of the document and the ideas it comprises in the short time available.

The first requirement is to select priorities and to convey them convincingly to the electorate. To suggest that all parts of the plan have equal importance and would be pursued with equal vigour would invite and deserve ridicule. The country deserves a political programme that presents a clear alternative to Thatcherite Conservatism and the Labour Party should now provide it. If this is to be achieved, the party leadership will have to concern itself with a handful of issues that are key in the context of British politics in 1983.

We would suggest that this handful consists of economic and industrial policy; defence and disarmament; law and order; civil rights; and social and family policy. These are the areas where the present government is doing the most serious damage to the fabric of British society. These are also the areas where the Labour Party has the most distinctive and potentially the most effective alternative policies.

In all of these areas, the claims that the party puts forward must be credible. It is not credible to claim that, within five years, 'Labour will end the scourge of youth unemployment'. Nor is it credible to suggest, as the plan does, that the greater part of the expenditure proposals designed to put some life back into the economy and to achieve a greater degree of social justice can be met just by increasing taxation on those with higher incomes and by a wealth tax.

What can and must be said is that massive Keynesian policies, designed to increase overall demand (and investment in particular) are now needed to reconstruct the British economy after the devastation wrought by the terrible failure of the Thatcher experiment. Here the proposals for public and co-operative enterprise, for a National Investment Bank and for expanded roles for existing institutions like the National Enterprise Board and the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies are all obviously sensible. Market forces and existing financial structures are not capable of the long-term investment decisions that the situation desperately requires.

The country's involvement in the North Sea and in the international oil industry is also now so deep, that this sector is far too important to leave entirely to private oil companies. The proposals to restore the British National Oil Corporation, to reacquire control of Britoil and to establish control of BP are essential to any sensible strategy. The easiest, quickest and cheapest way to achieve these goals would be for the government to enter the market and buy the relevant shares until it had a controlling 51 per cent, thus avoiding difficult legislation and heavy compensation.

Similarly, with defence the party now has the basis of a policy that presents a sane alternative to the present Tory madness. It is a clear and sensible objective to achieve a non-nuclear defence posture for the UK within five years. We have international defence commitments and alliances that should not be suddenly and arbitrarily ignored. The views of other NATO countries, in particular of France and West Germany, will need to be taken into account. The accusations that this policy represents some kind of 'appeasement' or unreadiness to defend the country must be brushed aside. The reality is that the policy is a recognition that the so-called independent, so-called British nuclear deterrent at great cost contributes absolutely nothing to the military security of the UK and that the further extension of the American-Russian nuclear arms race represented by any deployment of cruise and Pershing missiles also only adds to instability.

Equally welcome is the entirely new emphasis in Labour's present programme on civil rights, the rights of women, the protection of minorities, police accountability and a civilised regime for immigrants. The insidious attack by the Tories on these critical issues of human rights has been carried much further than most people have yet realised. Labour's past record in these areas has often left much to be desired: it must proclaim its new convictions confidently.

SO MUCH FOR THE positive elements. There are also policy proposals that should be put quite firmly on a back burner, if Labour's proposals to the electorate taken as a whole are to carry conviction. These include, for example, immediate withdrawal from the Common Market and the abolition of the House of Lords. The vigorous and immediate pursuit of either policy by an incoming Labour government would virtually assure that no other substantial element of the manifesto would be achieved in the first five years. In the case of the House of Lords, its abolition requires a reform of the working methods of the House of Commons, on which serious thinking has not begun. In the case of the EEC, if the document really means that 'Labour will pursue and win international support for policies designed to stimulate trade, investment and growth', the chances of anything being achieved by a government deliberately taking on all the main Continental governments at once would be zero. All the other economic, financial and industrial proposals of the Labour programme would be put at risk. It would be an irresponsible way to behave.

There are some policy areas where the campaign document clearly needs more radical work. What it has to say about personal taxation and benefits does not go nearly enough in the direction of comprehensive reform. Its proposals on devolution and local government pay fashionable lip service to the importance of local democracy, without facing the central fact that so long as the greater part of local government money is provided directly by the Treasury, so long will the centralising tendencies of the past 15 years continue. But these are failings of detail. The key question is what use the Labour leadership now makes of the straw that has been put in its hands. □

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Thatcherite guru accused of misusing public funds

AN AMERICAN who is treated as a guru by many of Mrs Thatcher's advisers in local government is now being investigated by a grand jury in Washington DC, following allegations he misused public funds.

The man in question, a former academic called E. S. Savas, is hardly a household name over here, but his views on privatisation – particularly the contracting-out of government services – have been enormously influential on Thatcherites. His seminal work – *Evaluating the Organisation of Service Delivery; Solid Waste Collection and Disposal* – is often cited at meetings of the Adam Smith Institute and similar groups.

He is also the inventor of 'Savas's Law', which is much admired by British 'privatisers'. This spurious law states that services provided by direct labour are 'always' two-and-a-half times more expensive than the same services provided by private contractors.

When President Reagan came to Washington, Mr Savas was given a job as head of policy development and research at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), at a salary of $67,200.

In January this year Savas was suspended from his post while the Department carried out an internal investigation into several charges against him. The main allegation was that he had used five HUD staff to edit and proofread one of his books during their working hours. The book was called *Privatising the Public Sector: How to Shrink the Government*.

The Department also looked into Savas's expenses claims for a number of trips to New York City and Europe, and into alleged improprieties in Savas's award of a consultancy contract to a firm called Ecodata, whose tender for the job was $190,000 higher than two of the competing bids. The president of Ecodata is one Barbara Stevens who had previously worked with Savas on his book about waste collection.

The inspector-general of HUD has now completed his inquiries, and has sent his report to the Justice Department, which has asked a grand jury to consider the matter. Leonard Birchman, an HUD spokesman, told the *NS* this week that Savas was still away from work, although 'we don't use the phrase "suspended" – he has been "placed on administrative leave" by the Secretary for Housing and Urban Development'. Mr Birchman expected the grand jury to reach a decision 'within the next couple of months'.

Francis Wheen

Kincora vice ring widens

SCANDAL at the Kincora boys home, involving sexual offences against boys in care at a DHSS home in East Belfast, and their alleged cover-up by senior civil servants, policemen and Unionist politicians, has been making headlines again in Northern Ireland more than a year after two top-level police inquiries were set up to investigate the affair.

Last month, the chief whip of the middle of the road Alliance party, John Cushnahan, told the Northern Ireland Assembly he had received information that four senior civil servants at the Northern Ireland Office, including one with the rank of under-secretary, had been involved in a homosexual vice ring at the home.

Cushnahan said that the role of politicians and other public figures who had been associates of the jailed Kincora housefather and loyalist paramilitary leader William McGrath needed to be revealed. He said there were widespread suspicions that McGrath's links stretched deep into the establishment and that many public figures had a vested interest in keeping the affair quiet. He claimed that a report on activities at Kincora had been presented to a very senior RUC officer, now retired, between 1973 and 1974, but no action had been taken.

In December 1981 three employees at the home, including McGrath, were sent to jail after they had admitted charges of buggery, indecent assault and gross indecency against teenage boys in their care. Over the next two months a series of articles in the *Irish Times* alleged that Kincora had been at the centre of a homosexual vice ring involving politicians and other public figures, and that senior officials in the DHSS, top RUC men and Orange Order leaders and Unionist politicians, including Rev Ian Paisley, had been approached in the early 1970s by a number of people with accusations of misconduct at the home.

In February 1982 the RUC reopened their inquiries into the affair, and after the collapse of an internal DHSS inquiry, the Secretary of State Jim Prior promised a full-scale public inquiry which would leave 'no stone unturned' to uncover the truth behind Kincora. At the same time a team of policemen from Sussex under their Chief Constable, Sir George Terry, was set up to investigate the RUC's handling of the affair.

Last month the RUC said that a report on its reopened investigation had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions in Belfast, although the Sussex police's inquiry had not yet been completed.

It is thought that both inquiries have been hampered by the refusal of William McGrath, now serving a four year sentence in the Maze pri-

Angry questions on Bluff Cove

BITTERNESS in Wales over the Falklands war, which claimed the lives of many Welsh Guardsmen, is intensifying as fresh evidence about the debacle at Bluff Cove emerges.

Fifty soldiers, mostly guardsmen, were killed when the landing ships Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad were bombed on 8 June. Film of badly burned survivors being helped ashore sent a wave of anguish over the Principality, reinforcing opposition to Thatcher's adventure which from the outset raised little enthusiasm west of Offa's Dyke.

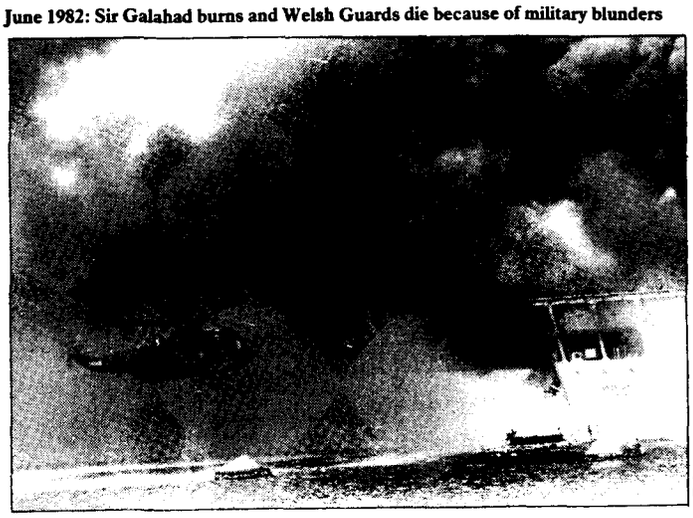
At the time the Ministry of Defence sought to minimise this greatest slaughter of British soldiers in the South Atlantic as being the result of a series of unfortunate coincidences. But now, after persistent probing by a Welsh MP and a bold television investigation mounted by BBC Wales (not seen outside Wales, unfortunately), the story looks somewhat different.

A letter to Plaid Cymru's Dafydd Elis Thomas, one of 33 MPs to vote against the government during a Falklands debate last year, from Peter Blaker, Minister for the Armed Forces, reveals risk-taking on a scale hard to imagine.

The troops were left on board ship for six hours on a calm and clear day. The water around Bluff Cove was too shallow to take a frigate that could have supplied anti-aircraft support. The aircraft on patrol were diverted to meet a threat to the main San Carlos beach head. Rapier anti-aircraft batteries were ashore, but they were either inoperative or 'masked by the terrain', ie not put in a place where they could be used.

Communications were so overloaded that the commanding officer of the Welsh Guards, who was already ashore, did not even know that men in his charge were cooped up in ships like targets at a fun fair. While ammunition and stores were being unloaded the men's last few hours slipped away.

June 1982: Sir Galahad burns and Welsh Guards die because of military blunders



PA

Mr Thomas is in no doubt that there were blunders of near criminal proportions. 'The Welsh Guards were sacrificed in order to get to Stanley quickly. The Army was interested in logistics instead of ferrying the troops ashore', he declares. Calling for a public inquiry, he says that if it had been a civil air crash there would have been 'claims and counter claims and, no doubt, legal action'. The Army put up Brigadier David Ramsbottom to attempt to soothe matters. He told viewers that an inquiry had taken place. 'The results will not be published, but it was held that no-one was to blame', he said.

The most telling comments come from relatives of the victims of the dash to seize Port Stanley before morale fell and questions grew over the Falklands War. Mrs Gillian Parsons, whose son Ian was killed, says: 'He did not die for his country; he died because of his country. There were men in charge of that ship (the Sir Galahad) who were paid to know better. That is why they are majors and my son was a private'.

Tony Heath

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son, to cooperate. McGrath, a lay preacher and self-confessed head of the shadowy loyalist paramilitary grouping Tara, has at various times had links with Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church and Democratic Unionist Party, as well as the Official Unionist Party and the Orange Order.

Police inquiries have also been frustrated by the silence of a former military intelligence officer, Colin Wallace, who is currently serving a jail sentence in England for killing his lover's husband. It is understood that Wallace, an army press officer who briefed journalists about McGrath's activities as long ago as 1973, told both the RUC and the Sussex police that he would be in breach of the Official Secrets Act if he talked to them.

Ironically, one of the most strident voices demanding a full public inquiry into the affair is Ian Paisley himself. One politician who has been following the case particularly closely claimed last month that such a consummate politician was unlikely to make an issue out of the potentially highly damaging scandal unless he was convinced that a public inquiry, which would have to be held under the expensive and cumbersome 1921 Tribunals of Inquiry Act, was unlikely ever to materialise.

Andrew Pollak

Andrew Pollak is a journalist on the Irish Times

Wage councils made powerless

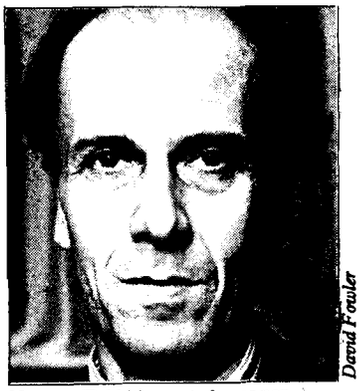
THE GOVERNMENT's massive reduction in the number of wage inspectors is in breach of Section 26 of the International Labour Organisation convention, according to evidence supplied by the wage inspectors' union, the Society of Civil and Public Servants.

Section 26 (of which the UK is a ratifying member) binds the government to 'create or maintain machinery whereby minimum rates of wages can be fixed' for workers employed in certain trades. Article Four of the Section demands that members enforce the minimum pay rates set by the machinery. The TUC, prompted by the SCPS, complained to the ILO in February that the minimum rates of pay can no longer be enforced.

Since coming into power in 1979 the government has reduced the number of wage inspectors by a third, from 177 to 119, allowing the average inspection rate on establishments to drop from once in every six years to once in every 10. The reduction counteracted the previous Labour government's intention of achieving a rate of one visit every four years. Between 400,000 and 500,000 establishments, covering 2¾ million people, are covered by wage councils which exist to prevent wages being forced too low in traditionally low-paid industries.

Chris Easterling, section secretary in the SCPS, has been compiling evidence for the TUC to present to the ILO. He has detailed seven major reasons why the enforcement of Wage Council rates is now no longer possible:

- Employers are not legally obliged to inform the Wages Inspectorate that they are Wage Council employers, with the result that the list of employers covered by Wage Councils is inadequate.
- One inspection every 10 years is equally inadequate. Given the rate of turnover in many of the industries concerned, many premises will never receive a visit during the lifetime of the business.
- It is unlikely that even the one in 10 target is being achieved. Because of centralised inspection procedures a short visit to a head office is counted for statistical purposes as a visit to *all* its outlets.
- Complaints cannot be followed up quickly enough – delays of up to six months are common.
- The recession and the consequent fear of losing one's job has brought a large increase in the number of confidential complaints, which, even without the cut in the Inspectorate, would make inspections more complex and time-consuming.
- Because of the lack of solicitors and the lengthy time needed to prepare a case for court, prosecutions become less likely even when serious breaches of legal minima arise.
- Government agencies are now in danger of advertising jobs at below the legal minimum rates.



David Fowler

Norman Tebbit's war to lower pay

Easterling's final point is the most disturbing. He claims that it is now not unusual to find Job Centres advertising jobs with pay rates below the legal minimum.

Wage inspectors are also becoming increasingly worried about the government's Young Workers' Scheme. It not only encourages employers to pay below the legal minimum in order to obtain the £15 subsidy, but also leads them to believe they are safe from prosecution ▶

MISCELLANY

Conserving his energy

Mrs Thatcher's absurd energy secretary, Nigel 'Niglet' Lawson, has never seemed to be the shy, retiring type. However, it now appears that he is. The House of Commons select committee on energy discovered this when it met just before Easter to discuss a Rayner review of the government's energy conservation programme. The meeting ended in acrimony because the civil servant who had conducted the review, Dr Elliott

Finer, had been instructed not to talk about anything connected with his advice to ministers. Niglet announced his policy of non-cooperation (which goes beyond the usual civil service rules on the subject) in a letter to Tory MP Ian Lloyd, who chairs the select committee. Lloyd agrees with Labour members of the committee that parliamentary oversight of the Department of Energy will be almost impossible unless Niglet allows some of its inner workings to become visible. In the case of Finer's review, Niglet has plenty to be shy about: the hallmarks of the official energy conservation strategy at the moment are misdirected effort and inter-departmental confusion. One can hardly blame the old brute for wanting to keep it under a bushel.

Nice one, Cyril

Since it was given a roasting in a Yorkshire TV documentary last year, the asbestos-making firm of Turner & Newall has had no more staunch defender than Cyril Smith MP. While other MPs have expressed disquiet about Yorkshire TV's revelations, Our Cyril has spoken of his 'faith in the firm's future'. As well he might: the latest official register of MPs' interests includes a new entry under the name of Smith, Cyril. 'Declarable shareholdings . . . Turner & Newall Ltd.' Glad to see him putting his money where his mouth is.

Busting out

Although companies and individuals are going bust at a fair old rate, in many cases this is 'not directly the fault of the borrower and in some [cases] the risks could not reasonably have been foreseen and avoided, even by good management on the business customer's part, except by following static and unenterprising policies'. The message is clear enough. The Thatcher-Howe recession is bankrupting what should be perfectly viable companies, and discouraging initiative and enterprise in the private sector of industry. It might have come from shadow chancellor Peter Shore or the Cambridge Economic Policy Group. In fact, it came from Sir Donald Barron, chairman of the Midland Bank, in his annual statement to shareholders. Welcome to the club, Don.

Printers' devil

As you may have noticed, the *Radio Times* did not appear last week. This was because of a dispute between Sogat '82 and Robert Maxwell's British Printing and Communications Corporation (BPCC), which had sacked 350 Sogat members at Park Royal, where *Radio Times* is printed. Robert Maxwell got his usual quota of publicity after the sackings. But, as usual, no attention at all was paid to BPCC's deputy chairman. This is a pity, for the gent in question is Sam Silkin, the Labour MP who holds the distinction of having been Britain's worst-ever Attorney General. (We may be biased: he spent a lot of time and money trying to imprison our own Duncan Campbell.) When Frank Allaun finishes his spirited campaign against Jonathan Aitken, he might care to ask how a senior Labour MP comes to be deputy chairman of such an outfit.

Lucky Jim

Let us now praise the *Standard*, London's dreadful evening newspaper. On the day that Sid Weighell resigned as NUR general secretary last year, the *Standard* ran a front-page story on the subject. It said, *inter alia*, that Jimmy Knapp was one of the leading contenders for Weighell's job. Actually, at the time, Knapp didn't intend to run for the post, having recently failed to be elected assistant general secretary. But the *Standard* story prompted various branches to nominate him. Knapp changed his mind, one thing led to another, and look what happened.

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because the wages have been sanctioned by another official of the Department of Employment. For the same reason, young employees are unlikely to complain.

The government, which has also been reported to the ILO by the Low Pay Unit for failing to establish minimum pay machinery for agricultural workers, would clearly like to abolish the Wage Councils, but they are bound by the ILO convention until 1985. Yet this does not seem to have deterred the Secretary of State for Employment, Norman Tebbit. By pressurising the Councils over their decisions (he recently persuaded the Retail Trade (Non-food) Wage Council to reduce a proposed new minimum rate from £67.50 a week to £66.25) and reducing the Wage Inspectorate, Tebbit has successfully rendered them ineffective. He is, in any case, opposed to the existence of Wage Councils.

The ILO report on the enforcement of Wage Council rates in the UK will be available in May.

Andrew Davidson

Tory shoots at Sheriff

SCOTTISH Sheriff David Kelbie's 'suitability' as a judge has been attacked by the chairman of the Conservative Party in Scotland following the trial of Faslane Peace Campers at Dumbarton Sheriff Court. The campers appeared on charges of Breach of the Peace and contravention of the Bail Act.

Sheriff Kelbie told the protestors that he 'couldn't deny a certain amount of admiration for people who behaved as they did and were prepared to take the consequences'. And when one of the accused, Les Robertson, said: 'The people who use Trident, cruise and other weapons of mass destruction are the real criminals', the Sheriff replied: 'There is very little you say with which I disagree'.

These remarks so incensed Scots Tory Chairman, Michael Ancram MP, that he immediately demanded a full enquiry. This was despite the fact that Sheriff Kelbie, a former Edinburgh advocate, also made it clear that his job was to uphold the law and sentenced Robertson to seven days in prison. The outraged MP asked the Scottish Secretary of State, George Younger, to act under section 12.1 of the Sheriff Courts (Scotland) Act 1971, 'on the *prima facie* basis that the Sheriff's remarks amount to "misbehaviour".' 'Misbehaviour' by a Sheriff can mean his removal from office.

George Younger refused to set up a full enquiry by senior judges. But he has asked the Sheriff Principal of North Strathclyde to prepare a report. And he may yet take further action – Strathclyde is one of six Scottish Sheriffdoms. It is split into eight districts, each of which has a Sheriff Court. Any minor offences committed at Faslane Submarine base are automatically remitted to Dumbarton Sheriff Court. So George Younger may consider removing the offending Sheriff to a less 'sensitive' Sheriffdom.

In the same week as this furore, Lord Fraser of Tullybelton was also expressing sympathy with someone outside the law – this time with a headmaster found to have illegally suspended a Sikh pupil for wearing a turban. In the House of Lords, Lord Fraser declared: 'I have much sympathy with him and I would have been glad to find the rule was justifiable within the statute, if I could have done so'.

Meanwhile, Dumbarton District Council has become the first Scottish Authority to boycott companies involved in extensions to nuclear bases. Tarmac, the main contractors at Greenham Common, have already been struck off the list of approved contractors. The Council, who have also granted Planning Permission for Faslane Peace Camp, hope other Scottish Authorities will follow suit.

Tricia Benzie

Sarah Benton adds

SIX WOMEN from Greenham Common walked free from Highbury Magistrates Court last week – the first time any women from Greenham brought before magistrates have not incurred a penalty.

The women had climbed into Holloway prison and staged a protest on the roof in February. The police brought them before the court for them to show why they should not be bound over to keep the peace. Mr Parkinson the magistrate unexpectedly agreed to their lawyers' claim that the women should be allowed to call evidence in their defence.

The police argued that the women's trespass had caused a disturbance in the prison. This, according to Holloway prison officers, took the form of a lot of shouting and singing – 'It would be very difficult if women sang all the time in prison' said one. As a consequence, the prisoners had to be locked in their cells for longer than usual.

Defence lawyers argued that the women prisoners were confined to their cells for a long time anyway because of staff shortages. Carol Harwood, who had been sent to Holloway prison in 1963 for a protest outside Greenham Common air base, testified that the normal level of banging and shouting inside the prison was so high that staff ignored shouts of distress from inmates. Mr Parkinson, apparently disconcerted to find that a high level of disturbance inside Holloway was the norm, refused to bind the six women over. His decision makes it less likely that police will try this particular form of legal discipline again.

Minister backs down on smear

MR PATRICK MAYHEW, the Home Office minister with responsibility for civil defence policy, has tacitly acknowledged that a smear apparently directed by him against the *New Statesman* was without any foundation.

During the Conservative Party Conference last September, Mr Mayhew announced a new policy initiative to a fringe meeting of the Bow Group and praised the efforts of the National Council for Civil Defence – a body whose membership overlaps with that of the anti-CND grouping, the Coalition for Peace through Security.

In his speech, Mr Mayhew claimed that critics of the government's civil defence policies were part of

> a campaign international in scope, apparently orchestrated in execution, and as little inhibited by concern for the truth as by any restraint upon the scale of its expenditure . . .

The speech singled out criticism of the plans for civil defence exercise *Hard Rock* as an example of the activities of this orchestrated and well-funded 'campaign'. As the *New Statesman* was the only journal at the time to have published criticism of the *Hard Rock* plans, Mr Mayhew's comments appeared defamatory of the *NS*. On 8 October, Duncan Campbell, whose report on *Hard Rock* had appeared on 17 September, wrote to Mr Mayhew, asking him to withdraw the suggestion that the *New Statesman* was part of an 'orchestrated international conspiracy'.

Mr Mayhew replied on 26 October. He 'gladly acknowledged' that the *New Statesman's* reporting was entirely accurate. But he declined to accept that anyone could have understood his other remarks to apply to us; if anyone had thus 'misconstrued' his remarks, we were invited to show them his letter. However, he offered no evidence that any orchestrated campaign, of any kind, was in existence – let alone one whose effect was 'to give great satisfaction to the USSR'.

Who, then, Duncan Campbell asked in November, was the Minister attacking? The Minister replied in December. He did not think that there was 'value in arguing the matter further in correspondence'. Since he had failed to produce any evidence for the existence of an 'orchestrated campaign', or to prove that the apparent attack on the *New Statesman* was a 'misconstruction', we tried once more. In February, we wrote to ask him to withdraw his remarks entirely 'unless they can be supported by evidence.'

The reply was predictable. He was sorry not to have replied earlier. He had nothing to add. If Mr Mayhew's speech was an example of government plans to win the hearts and minds of the people, he would do better to imitate the example of the disarmament lobby and stick to factual analysis of the arms race and the realities of nuclear war, instead of thus 'suppressing truth and suggesting falsehood'.

Hugh Stephenson

Ken and Benn in Brent

OBSTACLES in the way of Ken Livingstone, leader of the GLC, ousting Reg Freeson as the Labour candidate for Brent East will probably be supported by a Labour Party leadership which sees Livingstone in Parliament as a great threat.

Labour's organisational subcommittee is due to meet next Monday to decide whether or not Brent East CLP can select a new candidate before the general election. Reg Freeson, the sitting MP, has objected to a re-selection conference because the rules state that a contest should have taken place within 36 months of the 1979 general election. The NEC has been taking legal advice on the matter.

Re-selection was delayed after the left-dominated General Management Committee in Brent East decided to wait until after the May 1982 local elections – the 36 month deadline. The elections were then immediately followed by allegations that the Left had packed meetings and ousted right-wing local council candidates by irregular means. Eric Heffer and head office official Joyce Gould looked into the allegations, and a report of the inquiry has been submitted to the organisation committee.

Although the right-dominated NEC is not particularly partial to Freeson's politics – he is a Tribune member and on the left of the party on disarmament and Ireland – they are even less sympathetic to Livingstone's. 'As an MP, Ken will quickly attract young left-wingers around him, developing a style of politics that would be a threat to the present party leadership' said a leading member of the Brent East Labour Party last week.

Speculation in the local press has suggested that Livingstone might in fact switch his ambitions to Brent South, where Laurie Pavitt is the sitting MP, leaving Tony Benn to challenge Freeson for Brent East. But Benn has been even less explicit than Livingstone on what plans he has for his own political future.

Neil Hamilton

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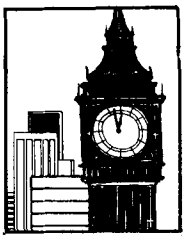

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Of superstitions, monsters and 'replacement ratios'

IT WAS THREATENING to rain. As I climbed down from the coach, all seemed ominously quiet; even the birds had stopped singing. That stretch of the Rhine, just a few miles up river from Cologne, is noted for its legends, superstitions and monsters. Yet that grey, eerie evening carried its own special sense of foreboding. I hastened towards the hotel's reception desk, quickly collected my room key, turned – and then I saw it. Like experiencing a distant memory that comes flooding back when you least expect it, I found myself face-to-face with one of the most fiendish adherents of full-blooded Thatcherism: Professor Patrick Minford.

As Chris Price noted in his diary last week, the annual Anglo-German Königswinter conference has the reputation for bringing together the sort of people who want Shirley Williams to rule the world. Inviting both Minford and myself – who agree about little except our attitude to Shirley Williams – showed that these days the organisers' reputation is no longer justified (if it ever was).

Stuck for three days in the same hotel as the Liverpool monetarist, I could not hope to avoid him altogether. So I talked to him. During a walk by the river we found a second point of agreement: that if – God help us – Mrs Thatcher wins a second full parliamentary term for pursuing her economic policies, then if there is no massive surge in economic growth, Minford's model will be finally discredited. Until now he has found an alibi for every bum prediction: first the City did not believe that the government would keep faith with its monetarist principles, then the unions did not believe inflation would be brought down, then the Americans screwed up all the predictions about world trade by having a recession of their own.

But, as Minford eagerly concedes, these short-term mistakes cannot undermine the fundamental strength of his analysis. Hence his continuing confidence that an economic miracle is just round the corner. Hence also his acknowledgement that should no miracle occur, he will have run out of alibis: his model would be wrong.

Meanwhile, anyone with an open mind need not wait so long to reach this conclusion. Two weeks ago Minford's book *Unemployment: Cause and Cure*[1] was published. Next week, the latest issue of *Fiscal Studies*[2] appears, with an article by Minford and two of his Liverpool colleagues. Examination of these latest contributions by Minford to public debate is revealing.

In his book Minford identifies

> two major distortions in the UK labour market which prevent real wages and productivity from adjusting naturally to shifts in technology, demand, and industrial structure.

These 'distortions', Minford says, account for most of our present unemployment. 'The first and most basic' is the unemployment benefit system. (The other is the power of the unions.) Minford argues that benefits are so high that unskilled workers' wages are in turn kept artificially high; the consequence is that many are priced out of work and on to the dole.

IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN this thesis, Minford's book carries 96 pages of statistical appendices in which his main purpose is to show that a great many lower-paid people have a high 'replacement ratio'. This somewhat daunting term is used to compare whether any given individual would be better off working for his (or her) present income, or drawing unemployment benefit. Stripped of its technicalities, someone who has a replacement ratio of 100 would have exactly the same disposable income in the short term whether in work or out of work. Someone with a ratio of 80 would be 20 per cent worse off on the dole; on a ratio of 120 he/she would be 20 per cent better off.

Minford's central claim is that he has 'proved' that millions of people have a ratio of more than 100, and so would be better off out of work. He reckons that this fact is central to any explanation of our present scale of unemployment.

Minford is wrong – simply, provably and gloriously wrong. Minford himself illustrates his argument by calculating the ratio for a man, with a non-working wife and two children, earning £100 a week. In his book (Table B.4(iv), Appendix B), he says the ratio is 114.2: that is, this family would typically be 14.2 per cent better off in the short term if the man went on to the dole. Minford proceeds to estimate that 21 per cent of married men with two children have jobs which yield a replacement ratio of more than 100 (page 36).

When Minford submitted his article to *Fiscal Studies* last summer, he offered the same calculation. IFS researchers queried it. It transpired that in one particular respect Minford had made a plain mistake: he had set the level of rent and rate rebates to which the working man was entitled at barely half their true level. Minford acknowledged the mistake. In his *Fiscal Studies* article the figure is corrected – from 114.2 to 110.4.

Minford claims that this is a trivial point; it does not undermine his general argument. Yet his whole argument is constructed upon a series of precise statistical steps, none of which can be checked readily by the reader (except for their internal consistency). Minford invites the reader to take his details on trust. If his details are faulty, why trust his conclusions?

There are other mistakes. Minford assumes that *all* people earning less than the 'break-even' level of pay have a replacement ratio of more than 100. Not so: such is the perversity of our benefits jungle that some of the lowest-paid people are entitled to sufficient extra benefits *while in work* to keep their ratio below 100.

Minford also assumes that you can generalise from 'typical' average families to the population as a whole. Not so: again, the complexity of our benefits system and the range of individual circumstances mean that, in practice, a great many people whom Minford estimates have a ratio of more than 100 have in fact a much lower ratio. (A much fuller discussion of this and other points can be found in John Kay and Nick Morris's rejoinder to Minford, also in the new issue of *Fiscal Studies*.)

A more debatable 'mistake' is the total of £20 that Minford puts on the weekly 'cost' of working – that is, travelling costs, together with various ancillary benefits, such as free school meals, that are sacrificed when a man works rather than stays at home. Minford provides no verifiable source for this estimate. Kay and Morris, whose own work on the British tax and benefits system puts them in a far superior league to Minford, estimate the average total 'cost' of working to be, at the most, half Minford's figure.

To any onlooker – especially an onlooker suffering in the real world of the poverty trap rather than inhabiting the strange world of warring computers – these may well seem rather esoteric, nit-picking points. Unfortunately, such is the way Minford has built detail upon detail to produce his mountain of wrong-headed but influential nonsense that he needs to be engaged on the detail of his figuring. This is what Kay and Morris have done. Minford estimates in his book that 16.5 per cent of all families have a short-term replacement ratio of more than 100. Kay and Morris put the figure at 2.6 per cent. It has also fallen sharply in the past five years. Whatever the cause of the sharp rise in unemployment since Mrs Thatcher came to power, the *level* of unemployment and other benefits has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with it. □

1. Published by Martin Robertson, £12.50.
2. Published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, 1 Castle Lane, London SW1.

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CABLE TV

Licence to lose money

Cable TV was to be the Tories' high technology answer to reviving the British economy. Bob Woffinden describes how the idea has gone sour

LAST YEAR'S great debate about cable television, leading up to the publication of the Hunt committee report in October, took place in an excitable atmosphere. There was the euphoria of its advocates, who expected cable to increase choice, meet minority interests and serve the community; and the paranoia of the television authorities, who predicted that an extra 30 channels would actually erode choice and undermine current broadcasting standards.

Since then, much has happened to dispel both euphoria and paranoia. There has been the stormy baptism of Channel 4; the consternation of the television companies over the *apparent* decline in audiences registered in the period up to and including Christmas; and, most recently, the extraordinary first seven weeks of TV-am.

In fact, viewing figures have since recovered lost ground and the unexplained apparent dip has merely persuaded TV executives to improve their audience measurement methods. Nevertheless, the three factors together suggest, however uncertainly, that there is in fact no vast, still untapped audience for television in this country and little demand for new programming or new channels. The national appetite seems to be satisfied already. Even before the publication of the government's White Paper (expected next week), cable television is no longer the glittering prospect it so lately seemed. Both the Greater London Council and Sheffield are proposing to hold public enquiries into how cable might affect them.

Last August, Harold Evans (former editor of both the *Sunday Times* and *The Times* and now a director of Goldcrest Films and Television) made a passionate case, in the *Observer*, for the introduction of a 24-hour cable news channel to the UK. By December, the very idea seemed absurd. The solitary extra hour's news provided by Channel 4 was achieving sadly small ratings and causing headaches for all concerned. Breakfast television has now won roughly its anticipated audience (about two million: it is the distribution of that audience between BBC and TV-am which was unforeseen), but it has done so by de-emphasising heavily the news content of the programmes.

Prospects that cable might supply additional arts programming are similarly bleak. Channel 4, which arrives free of charge and can be received throughout most of the country, has transmitted excellent arts programmes, many of which have been viewed by audiences too tiny to be measured. A nascent cable company would need to demonstrate commercial viability; it is simply not conceivable that it would be able to offer adventurous or worthwhile programming and survive.

ON THE OTHER HAND, cable is already having an insidious influence on existing broadcasting standards, via the Equity/IPA (Institute of Practitioners in Advertising) dispute. This might appear to have nothing to do with cable; in fact, it has everything to do with it. It is because of the fragmentation of audiences which cable will supposedly effect that the IPA is so determined to establish the precedent of relating actors' fees to audience size and, equally, why Equity is so determined to resist it. The long shadow of cable has turned a solvable dispute into an intractable one (each side reports that negotiations are 'completely deadlocked').

Cable television has traditionally thrived in countries which lack adequate broadcasting services of their own, both in terms of programmes and quality of reception. Its commercial potential in the UK has, therefore, been massively overstated. Most advocates of cable have assumed, wrongly, that there is an available audience ready to take up extra TV channels; all have overlooked the formidable competitive instincts of the BBC. As a merchant banker specialising in television finance commented, 'When the BBC wants to get down, it can really get down.'

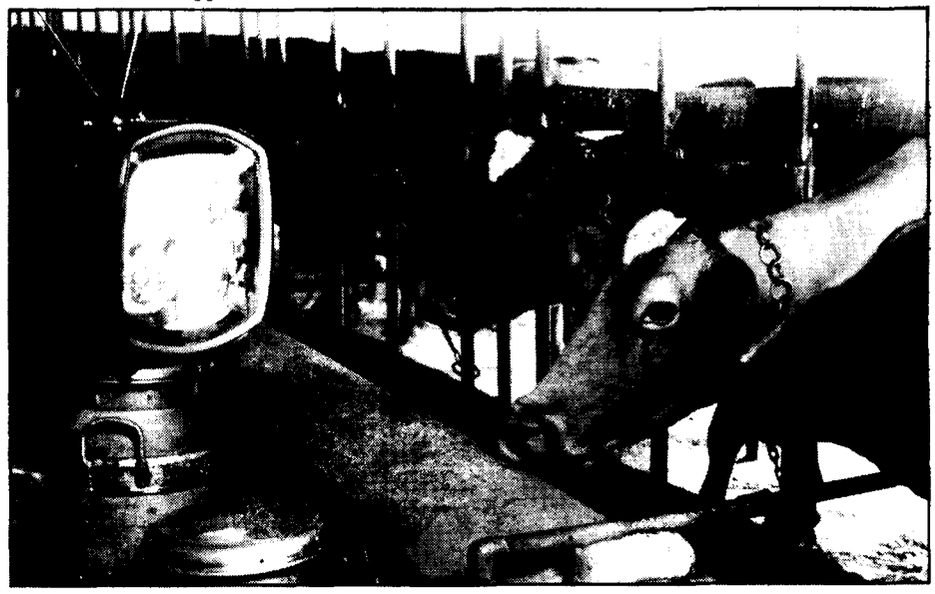
Thankfully, that should not be necessary. The forthcoming White Paper will not allow cable the unfettered scope which represents the only route to profitability. The Hunt report was not an especially useful addition to the debate, and a Home Office source reveals that it should be regarded as 'by no means sacrosanct'.

To ensure its commercial survival, any cable operation will need both blockbuster attractions and lots of cheap programming. It is difficult to see how it will acquire either. The Home Office source confirms that the government (surprisingly, perhaps) is convinced by the argument that cable companies shouldn't be allowed to purchase exclusive rights to national sporting events, such as Wimbledon or the Cup Final.

The bid by the video company Telejector for exclusive rights to screen highlights of football league matches nevertheless illustrates what could happen if cable companies flourished and sundered the cosy BBC/ITV duopoly. The opportunity to see programmes of a broad national interest would be restricted to small sections of the community. Two points, though, should be remembered. The TV companies are actually less chagrined than they might publicly seem about the prospect of losing league football; armchair attendances have been declining almost as rapidly as the real thing. Secondly, a Telejector deal could encounter problems with the Office of Fair Trading.

Deprived of sporting coups, cable concerns would rely heavily on feature films. The problem here is that, from 1986, the BBC will be operating its own movie service as one of its DBS (direct broadcasting by satellite) channels. The BBC operation starts with certain advantages: it will be available across the nation, from the

Is there still an untapped market for cable television?



Keystone

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outset, and will further offer excellent technical quality even in areas where reception has traditionally been poor. (Of course, this is also an advantage of cable; it's just that no cable company intends taking it to inaccessible areas.) The BBC already has an extensive film library, and is even now supplementing it by purchasing rights to particular films in advance of its ability to screen them (it bought *Chariots of Fire* last year). And, in the final analysis, the BBC enjoys such respect throughout the country that the average consumer, faced by a choice between a film service offered by the BBC and one provided by a cable company, would probably opt for the former.

ALASDAIR MILNE, director-general of the BBC, has also announced that if the government bows to pressure from cable concerns and sanctions pay-per-view (which could mean that a household's television would be metered like its telephone; and could make some sporting events, boxing matches, perhaps, or some major films commercially attractive), then the BBC will similarly introduce a pay-per-view facility for its DBS service.

To procure cheap programming, a cable company would like to buy material by the yard from the US. Those who have suggested that cable would simply provide 'wall-to-wall *Dallas*' seem to have overlooked the fact that *Dallas* represents a pinnacle, of sorts. It is the many shoddy drama series which BBC/ITV *don't* purchase which would appeal to a cable set-up. The government White Paper, however, will overrule Hunt and place restrictions on the importation of foreign material (the present quota is 15 per cent).

Similarly, cable companies will not have access to cheap programming from domestic sources. At present, broadcasting agreements with Equity provide only for one transmission and one repeat; after that, terms are subject to renegotiation. Equity is hardly going to allow the talents of its membership to be undersold.

A cable company could hardly make its own programmes since costs would be prohibitive – they can currently run as high as £200,000 an hour – and, in any case, it is unlikely they would be able to make programmes of a sufficiently high technical standard to woo viewers from the existing services. So what's left? 'The one sure way a cable company could make money,' admits a Home Office source, 'is by devoting a channel entirely to video "nasties" – but they won't be allowed to do that.'

The danger remains that a cable authority would impose standards initially, but then abrogate its responsibilities if a company ran into commercial difficulties. However, one of the ironies of the present situation is that, if cable companies concentrated on making a financial return to the exclusion of all considerations of programme quality, prevailing broadcasting standards would undoubtedly suffer. (ITV would need to compete for advertising, and the BBC would need to justify the licence fee.) This would be totally illogical, since the industrial and employment opportunities which the government has discerned in cable are related not just to the hardware (the cable technology) but also the software (the programmes) – and the export potential of UK TV programmes is entirely based on their hard-earned reputation for quality.

THE BATTLE INSIDE Whitehall between the visionaries at the Department of Industry, who wish to boost technological advance and stimulate industry by sweeping away all broadcasting restrictions, and the traditionalists at the Home Office, who wish to retain the present supervisory powers over broadcasting, has mirrored the debate taking place throughout the country. Although Home Secretary William Whitelaw espouses the cause of cable, he wants to keep it within the present regulatory framework. 'The Home Office feels that it has allowed the DoI to make the running so far, but now it wants broadcasting back as its responsibility,' confirmed the source.

So the more avaricious dreams of the cable entrepreneurs will be thwarted. Given the expertise, durability and resilience of the existing broadcasting services, cable will work, if at all, only if it is carefully nurtured over a long period. 'You would only expect to see a return on your investment over ten years,' estimated John Birt, director of programmes of London Weekend Television. In the wake of the seven-week itch of TV-am's shareholders, how many cable investors will exercise the necessary degree of forbearance?

The existing cable companies have been understandably reticent over the 13 different UK experiments currently in progress, since none is successful. Rediffusion's Starview experiment in Hull has achieved an exceptionally high 20 per cent penetration, but still the project doesn't make financial sense (film royalties are considerable), and the company is coy about revealing just how many subscribers have defaulted on their monthly payments. A spokeswoman explains that the area is one of 98 per cent council housing, that there is high unemployment, and that tenants aren't paying their rent, let alone their other bills. Which is exactly the point: areas of high-density housing, the most suitable target territory for cable operations, are also the ones least likely to be able to finance them.

It may seem churlish to put the boot in on the solitary scheme for industrial expansion which the present government seems to possess, but as a strategy to pull Britain out of the recession – which is what both Mrs Thatcher and Kenneth Baker, minister of state at the DoI, imagine it to be – this is preposterously ill-conceived. Cable is not a commercial proposition.

This is not to damn the whole field of information technology – merely to point out that the government is mistaken in assuming that it can be sold on the back of cable television.

Entrepreneurs will still rush in, though. The business community has still not worked Lord Thomson's famous 'licence to print money' quote out of its system. A lot of shirts will be lost. □

EDUCATION

Freedom to go where you're told

In 1981 the government launched a new scheme for 'parental choice' of schools. Rick Rogers reviews the record of this expensive charade

LOCAL EDUCATION authorities spent around £2 million last year to ensure that 3,000 children got the school place their parents wanted. That sum, equivalent to the net cost of educating the same number of primary schoolchildren for a whole year, is the bill for the first year of the government's much-hyped policy of 'unlimited' parental choice of school, via local appeal tribunals. It is a high price to pay for what is little more than a confidence trick.

In September, 1,000,000 children moved into primary education, or transferred from primary to secondary school. According to the Department of Education and Science (DES), a mere 8,000-10,000 appeals, for or against a school place, were heard by the hundreds of local and school-based appeal tribunals set up under the 1980 Education Act. This means that one per cent of the parents went before a tribunal – and a third of those got what they wanted.

But, every year, over 90 per cent of parents *already* get their first choice of school. In some authorities, it is as high as 97 per cent. Most of the rest end up either satisfied or not sufficiently distressed to make a formal complaint to the DES or to keep their child away from the unwanted school.

The final court of appeal now rests with the local tribunal, rather than with the Secretary of State. The DES has long wanted to be shot of school-place complaints. A thousand parents a year appealed under section 68 of the 1944 Act that their LEA was 'acting unreasonably' in denying them the place they wanted. A third usually won. The DES had, under Labour, tried and failed to switch such complaints to industrial tribunals. Last year it had only 313 complaints. All were rejected, specifically, says Education Minister Rhodes Boyson, 'so that local authorities have not been undermined by saying they have not been doing their job'.

Yet that one-third success rate at the new tribunals hides large differences between LEAs. Derbyshire boasts a success rate for parents of 62 per cent, but Bexley one of a mere 3 per cent. Inner London had 1,184 appeals, of which 345 (29 per cent) were

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upheld – but the success rate for county schools was 15 per cent and for church schools 15 per cent. Such figures tell only part of the story. Some LEAs have worked hard to deter parents from going to tribunals with an exhaustive series of informal negotiations to try to seal a deal on a school place. Many claim not to have altered long-standing procedures at all – merely tacking the tribunals on at the end.

Informal talks are seen as cheaper than tribunals. Derbyshire (79 appeals from 14,000 transfers) had to draft in the equivalent of four solicitors to handle tribunals. ILEA needed 35 extra clerks and an additional £60,000 – although 'hidden' administrative costs more than double that figure. Haringey estimates that the money spent on its tribunals (55 appeals out of 2,100 transfers) could have upped by a quarter the capitation allowance for every 11-year-old in school.

WELL INTO YEAR TWO of the tribunal system, there is still little detailed official information as to how well it operates. The results of a DES survey, much heralded by Boyson last December, is now unlikely to be made public. DES officials say it is not at all comprehensive and would not stand up to scrutiny. A Society of Education Officers' working party has still to report on a trawl of LEA experiences.

But many LEAs are complaining of the expense and complexity of the new system. They also say it has changed little to the benefit of parents. In turn, the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE), the education watchdog organisation, reports that many parents are bitter that the government has raised expectations that cannot be met.

For the Conservative promise of 'unlimited choice' of school is unattainable, both in practical terms and in relation to the Tories' own education policy. The government itself has laid down that schools must operate according to pre-arranged admission levels. If an LEA wants to alter substantially the size of a school's annual intake of children, it must seek the Education Secretary's approval. Also, selective schools still operate in 36 LEAs – one in three. Kingston, for example, creams off 15 per cent of children to grammar schools. There is no choice of those schools for the other 85 per cent, whatever their ability.

Half the LEAs, both Tory and Labour, operate catchment areas or designate 'feeder' primary schools for allocating secondary places. The rest allow parents to list any school in the LEA in order of preference. When demand exceeds the number of places, LEAs apply a set of criteria – family connections, medical or social reasons, nearness to school. Others add a random element by running names through a computer. For there to be unlimited choice, all such restrictions would have to go.

LEAs admit to surprise at how few appeals there have been, especially in the more autonomous, voluntary school sector. This is put down to parents making shrewd assessments of their chances at oversubscribed schools and to there being plenty of room in many schools because of falling pupil numbers. But LEAs also fear there will soon be a dramatic increase in appeals. The government is pressing LEAs to scale down the school system fast. Once complete, there will be much less flexibility.

Mike Abrahams/Network

What real educational choices is this government offering them?

Peter Ward, acting director of schools for London's Anglican diocese, reckons that the low appeals figure is due to parental ignorance of the new system. He says that the church authorities 'thought they would be thrown into utter chaos by this ludicrous Act'. He adds that he is not referring to the principle of choice, but to the Act's complexities. It has, he claims, just not been thought through.

THOSE COMPLEXITIES are being sifted by the Educational Management Information Exchange (EMIE). Set up in 1981, with DES and local authority funding, EMIE advises LEAs on policy issues and good practice. And LEAs have bombarded EMIE with problems over the tribunals. In effect, LEAs don't really know where they stand with tribunals.

Though meant to be independent, tribunals are expected to stick to LEA policy on admissions to school. Labour metropolitan authorities such as Leeds complain of 'gross injustices caused by subjective decisions' which override LEA policy. In turn, LEAs such as Newham have either 'packed' tribunals with tame councillors or, like Ealing, leant heavily on tribunals to ensure they go the LEA's way. School heads also point to numerous LEAs 'massaging the system' by holding back vacancies in popular schools so that a high number of appeals succeed.

Parents, too, have readily played the system. Examples include giving a false address and harassing other parents appealing for the same school place. The most common ploy is to list only one school preference, gambling that a tribunal is more likely to give that place in the end. Consequently, LEAs and parent groups say that they find the new system no fairer than before and a lot more trouble and expense.

What the Act *has* done is to force LEAs to supply much more information to parents about schools and admission policies. It has also universalised a parent's right to state a school preference (not to choose a school) but still hedged it in by the traditional official safeguards of unreasonable expense and inefficient schooling. However, surveys show many LEAs have yet to learn how best to provide that information. And the Act has so far failed to get many of the recalcitrant church schools to explain their admission policies.

Most parents would benefit more from being given more direct influence in schools, and from LEAs setting out in detail just how they draw catchment areas and define admission policies, than from having a 'free' choice. Several LEAs such as Berkshire, Harrow and Doncaster have already been criticised for allegedly operating covert discriminatory policies of class or race. (Reading's schools were recently cleared of such charges by the CRE.)

Nor does the Act resolve the well-grounded concerns that some parents do have about the schooling on offer to them. No government has yet got to grips with the problem of the unpopular or the failing school. The Conservative answer via tribunals, unlimited choice and vouchers, is to encourage a free-for-all. And that, says ACE, makes education a lottery leading to what it aptly terms a 'portakabin education service' – and a much more divisive one.

On top of that, it is the Government's other education policies that have limited what groups like ACE see as the real choices parents and their children ought to be able to make – not so much choice between schools, as educational choices within them, and the career choices beyond. □

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ What strengthens my conservatism is that for me a CND badge and a swastika are essentially interchangeable. – Lord Beloff in *The Times* (Michael Rubinstein)

☐ The train guard who was last month elected leader of the new breakaway railwaymen's union, has been asked to resign by his fellow officials because, they complain, he spends too much time hunting ghosts and looking for flying saucers. – *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

☐ At the monthly meeting of Fordingbridge WI a talk was given by Miss de Pledge on My Life in Uniform. Her passion for uniform took her from Brownies, Guides and Rangers into the ATS and on to 30 years in the police force. – *Ringwood & Fordingbridge Journal* (B. Rubinstein)

☐ London Festival Ballet expects to end the financial year with a £200,000 deficit, largely because London audiences fell to 70 per cent of capacity or £160,000 below box office expectations. The slump is attributed in part to the Falklands crisis. – *Daily Telegraph* (Stephen O'Loughlin)

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MARKETING

Cults for capitalism

Caroline Berman looks at the Exegesis way of making money

A STRANGE RITUAL takes place every morning at Programmes, a company which in two years has grown from a one-woman operation to the largest telephone sales organisation in the UK.

All 120 staff stand in the middle of the huge high-tech office in Queens Park, North London, and in unison they chant a countdown from ten. They clap their hands above their heads and below their knees at every beat and the effect is like a ten-second excerpt from a Hollywood musical. When they reach zero they shout 'Go', rush to the phones and start work. It is very eerie to watch, because nobody shows any sign of cynicism or inhibition.

This is just one part of Programmes' unusual method of motivating its sales staff. Another is that nearly everyone at Programmes is a member of the Exegesis cult. They've all been through a gruelling and highly controversial three-day self-awareness course.

Exegesis is the creed taught by The Exegesis Programme, a profitable company started by Robert D'Aubigny (formerly Fuller) and Judith Kramer, a Liberal Party parliamentary candidate and barrister. People pay £230 to go on the course during which they are subjected to considerable emotional strain, then encouraged to believe that they have the power to achieve anything they want. They are also encouraged to attend more Exegesis courses and to invite their friends to do the same.

Programmes is the most successful of the companies associated with The Exegesis Programme. The directors of Programmes, Elisabeth Gluck and Nicholas Vesey, regularly lecture at the introductory seminars that are held to persuade people to go on the Exegesis courses. Elisabeth Gluck, the 27-year-old managing director, explained that many 'graduates' of the course join Programmes because they want to work with similarly motivated people. Some of the people that Gluck employs as telephone sellers were lawyers, teachers or computer programmers before. She herself was an art therapist teaching mentally disturbed prisoners at Holloway.

'I don't think I would ever have made such a good job of running my business without Exegesis', said Gluck. 'Mostly it's assisted me in communication and working with other people. I'm able to achieve what I want to achieve and put ideas into practice'. Elisabeth Gluck said that hers was not the only telephone sales company that uses Exegesis graduates. 'Out of the four or five good telephone sales companies, three of them employ Exegesis people', she said.

If the Exegesis course makes people into such ace sellers it's not surprising to hear that one insurance company only employs Exegesis graduates. And the same sales techniques can be used for political ends. When Judith Kramer stood as Liberal candidate for Deptford in the last GLC local election, she used a team of Exegesis graduates to canvass the electorate systematically, although she said she only had a quarter of the number of canvassers she needed. Although she didn't win she had an abnormally good result for a Liberal in that area. Judith Kramer also canvassed for Clement Freud MP, who regards her as 'a super lady'.

PROGRAMMES IS USED by a multitude of companies from sellers of telephone logging systems to sellers of canned meat. Allen & Unwin uses Programmes to promote its book list to book shops and the *Financial Times* uses the company to help sell its diaries. Many of Programmes' clients are computer companies including IBM, ICL, Hewlett Packard and Commodore. These firms use the telephone sales company to establish dealer networks, sell computer programmes, sell computers or invite selected people to trade fairs.

Compared with normal telephone sellers, Programmes' hit-rate is very impressive. 'Each phoner can sell £4,000 worth of books over the phone every day', said Elisabeth Gluck. For this the sellers are paid between £400 and £700 a month. They are paid a flat rate rather than a commission on sales. 'We don't want people to be too pushy when they're representing companies with good reputations', said Gluck.

But John Shelley of Computer Technology had been concerned about the number of complaints Programmes had generated when he had used their service:

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P. Bennett

Judith Kramer: canvassing the Exegesis way

'Every marketing campaign we've had run by Programmes has generated complaints. After three or four call backs the secretary still won't let the callers through to the decision maker. Several companies have written to us complaining about the background noise and persistence of the callers.'

Programmes' success is in part due to their aggressive technique. 'They never stopped calling me, they wouldn't take no for an answer', said a manager of a field engineering company whom Programmes had been phoning. A spokeswoman for Ferrari computers complained: 'They phone us up twice a week with the same old patter'.

One reason for the sellers' persistence is the tremendous pressure on them to meet almost hourly targets. All the telephone callers sit at tables arranged in circular groups of around 12 people. There are about 5 or 6 such groups, each with a leader whose function is to keep the phoners happy and make sure they meet their targets. If they get three no's in a row, they are given a pep talk by their leader and taken off for more training. Everyone who works at Programmes must do a stint on the phones, said Gluck, although the phoners are always moved to another job after four months.

Gluck encourages clients to come and see the set-up at her office and many are amazed by the 'youth and enthusiasm' of the company. 'It was extraordinarily refreshing for an old hack salesman' said one potential client who said he had been 'almost forced to visit Programmes' after seeing them at a trade fair.

But other clients sense that something is not quite normal at Programmes: 'It's almost like an evangelical thing', said one company director who had seen Programmes in action. 'They whip themselves up into a fervour. They shout "order" when they have a success and everyone cheers and claps. It's almost like a revivalist meeting'. Another visitor commented that there was a very strong group feeing. The leader actually massages the shoulders of the phoners while they are making their calls.

John Shelley has become rather cynical about the use of telephone sales companies: 'The audience is becoming more aware of it

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as a technique – like with the mailshots which now go straight into the bin. People recognise a scripted approach from telephone marketing companies.' The scripts which Programmes uses are very highly structured so that the callers always have an answer to any objection that may be raised.

EXACTLY THE SAME kind of hard sell technique is used at the seminars which are held to encourage people to come on the Exegesis course. The afternoon is carefully structured so that people first have to admit they are not perfect, then to say what they want to change in their personality, then to feel they need to go on the course to change their personality.

The feeling of group identity present at Programmes is also very apparent at the Exegesis meetings. All the 'graduates' are expected to back up the leader, to laugh at his jokes, applaud and support him and ridicule anyone who disagrees with him. They say they're separating ideas and opinions from facts but anything that disagrees with Exegesis is classed as 'ideas and opinions'.

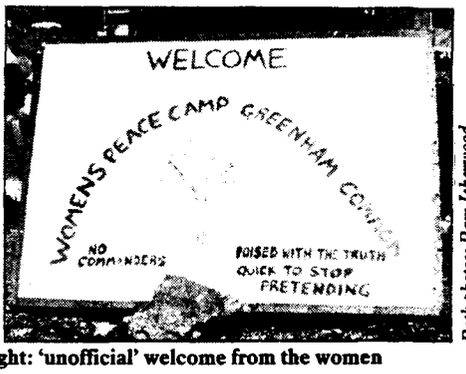
'Reason itself is devalued', commented Dr Anthony Clare of the Institute of Psychiatry. 'I'm sure Exegesis does change people. And it will maintain that change as long as they maintain contact with the group and are continually exposed to its ideas. It's somewhere between a religious movement and a brainwashing organisation. To be a committed salesman in the twentieth century requires dehumanisation. All these cults are about nothing more than making money.'

Programmes' success is an excellent advertisement for the Exegesis cult. The two companies feed off each other. 'People who have done the course want to work hard and so decide to work with people who want to work hard', said Elisabeth Gluck. 'That's why they join Programmes'. Business owners take note: if you want to instil a work ethic in the 1980s, join a cult. □

PEACE MOVEMENT

Human chains

Sarah Benton on how CND dealt with some of the obstacles to last weekend's Easter action



Both photos: Pam Isherwood

Left: 'Official' welcome to Greenham Common; right: 'unofficial' welcome from the women

THE 'MASS invasion' of tens of thousands of people into Britain's 'nuclear valley' over the Easter weekend left the area cleaner than before they arrived. Both the Vicar and Parish Council chairperson of Burghfield, one of the focal points of Friday's 'human chain', have congratulated CND on their clearing-up operation. The operation was carefully planned because in recent weeks opponents of the Greenham peace camp have chosen to criticise it not for its political purpose but for the amount of rubbish it deposits on the surrounding countryside.

CND had initially hoped to place skips in the area for collecting rubbish. However, Newbury District Council refused to give permission for skips to be put down. Instead, CND bought 1,000 plastic rubbish bags from the council and organised teams of volunteers to scour the 14-mile route picking up litter, old and new. Newbury Council also felt 'unable to accede to CND's request' to erect portable WCs on Padworth Common. Nonetheless, CND went ahead and put WC blocks at Padworth Common, Burghfield and Greenham and erected toilet tents at each of the 14 stations along the route. According to a spokesman for Newbury District Council 'as far as litter and disturbance went, we were better pleased than we might have been'.

Planning any mixed event around Greenham had, at some points last year, appeared impossible. Discussions for some form of joint action between the Greenham Women's Peace Camp and CND began after Reagan's visit to London last June. A group called the Greenham Alliance was set up, which included representatives from CND nationally, in Newbury and from its Southern Region; the construction union UCATT; Green CND and Friends of the Earth as well as from the Peace Camp.

Differences of political outlook made joint organisational planning difficult; instead, the group ended up as a loose political discussion group dealing with the fears of Greenham Women that their distinctive women-led action would be taken over by CND, and CND's fear that unless joint activity were properly planned, the pressure by supporters to do something around Greenham would disintegrate into chaos. Discussion was complicated by the fact that the Greenham women had no form of organisation that slotted easily into committee and national planning meetings.

After several sessions of discussion, but with no clear plan formulated, the issue then passed from the Greenham Alliance group to CND's Projects Committee. They decided to propose to CND's National Conference last November that there should be some form of joint action at Greenham this Easter, but that the women only presence at Greenham Common itself be respected. This proposal was accepted by Conference. A last-minute motion by the Socialist Workers Party that there should be a 'mass mobilisation' for the blockade of Greenham air base on 12-13 December never reached the Conference floor. Had it been put to Conference in that form, with the clear implication that the direction of events of Greenham be passed to a traditional left-wing organising committee, it would not have been passed.

The latent tension between Greenham women and CND subsided consierably after the Conference and the 12-13 December blockade of Greenham air base. A number of women associated with Greenham had been elected to CND's National Committee so they had, for the first time, their own direct voice. Thousands of people, including hundreds of men, had turned up at Greenham, for the first time, without causing the mayhem that many had feared.

Shortly after this, inspired by the symbolism of the linked hands round Greenham, a new proposal for the Easter action was made. Instead of a march from Aldermaston, which would be joined by Greenham women along the way – the initial suggestion – it was decided to try to form the 14-mile human chain. This scheme not only encouraged the participation of men and mixed groups, it also brought in the Royal Ordnance Factory at Burghfield (the final assembly point for Britain's nuclear weapons) – and it was imaginative. The scheme was enthusiastically endorsed by CND's National Council on 16-17 January.

At the same time as planning the organisation of the Easter action, CND plunged into a form of planning almost unheard of in British radical protest. Nationally and locally hundreds of educational sessions were set up, many of them residential weekends, in which CND activists trained in non-violent direct action. The sessions drew on a range of therapy and role-playing techniques, in which participants learned to trust each other, and cope with aggression. Out of this, a body of 'personal political' technique is developing. For instance, CND's National Organiser, Christine Kings, found herself pretending to be a police officer at one session. Faced with a group holding a silent vigil and refusing to speak to her, she felt her frustration with them growing to anger. They decided that in any protest action, at least one person should be prepared to speak to the police.

Whether CND succeeds in keeping out cruise missiles or not, it appears that it will have changed the quality of political life for many of its supporters. □

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DIARY

Christopher Price

To St Helier, Jersey, for the annual conference of the National Union of Teachers. Inveigled here two years ago with promises of VAT-less restaurants, Easter sunshine and an unparalleled conference atmosphere, the delegates have been met by snow, a conference centre in a draughty aircraft hangar on top of one hill and on top of another, a mile away, a headquarters hotel in a converted Jesuit monastery. Trudging through the windy alleys from one venue to another, I pass offices studded with myriad unlikely-sounding company brass plates – the only visible evidence of the island's principal industry: tax avoidance. Apart from this, and package tourism, the only profit-making activity seems to be German nostalgia. They've lovingly preserved an underground hospital, built by slave labour for German casualties in the great invasion which never transpired in 1940 and, helped by the recent TV serial about German officers being gentlemen in Guernsey, the cult is catching on. The island's smartest hotel has christened one of its watering holes The Wunder Bar.

○

Though the bars of the smarter hotels are replete with clones of Charlie Hungerford, that ubiquitous property developer in the *Bergerac* TV series, sleazy habits in these off-shore islands are not confined to the quick buck and the shady deal. Just as the Isle of Man clings tenaciously to judicial flogging, so does Jersey to the prosecution of homosexual acts in private. The only way in which gay teachers could register a protest against this law was to oppose the vote of thanks to the Island boss, Sir Frank Ereaut, at the formal opening of the conference. Their Chairperson was ruled out of order every time he uttered the dreaded word 'gay'. I thought this a little unfair, since the new NUT President, Don Winters, followed the episode with a speech of great humanity, quoting Archbishop Temple: 'There exists a form of slavery quite as real as any economic form . . . if you want human liberty, you must have educated people.' I'm not sure educated people are best produced by teachers who shy away in blind terror from the mere mention of homosexuality.

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But I saw their point in trying to bury the issue. The most animated applause on my clapometer was engendered by attacks on the press. Sue Reid, in the *Daily Express*, had reported the gays as shouting down Sir Frank, an incident unremarked by anyone else, confirming teachers' prejudice against journalists and, no doubt, that of Keith Joseph against the teaching profession. He's just issued a White Paper with the enigmatic title 'Teaching Quality', urging the sacking of incompetent heads and teachers. But local councils get no help from him and his ilk when they try. There's a long running case in Wakefield, at the moment, in which the local Labour Council is trying to follow Joseph's advice by removing a Head they feel to be incompetent, and facing hysterical accusations of political bias from Christopher Rowlands, the Education Correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, for their pains. Ever since the Black Papers, schools and teachers have been getting a slowly worsening press. Apart from the *Daily Mirror*, with its excellent 'Save our Schools' campaign, the other populars pander to their owners' political prejudices and collude with Keith Joseph in making teachers scapegoats for the cuts. The conference was right to be angry.

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Number two on my clapometer was the attack by Don Winters on educational privatisation – vouchers, student loans, parental funds to prop up crumbling schools and the 'escape route' from oversize classes provided by private schools for the children of the wealthy. Don is a Newcastle Headmaster and his speech was an impassioned plea for publicly provided schooling for the whole community. As he succinctly put it: 'Actually being on board a ship gives you a sharpened interest in its seaworthiness.' The mass of the conference delegates who applauded this were a pretty staid, conservative bunch; but there's little doubt they would support the promise in Labour's Campaign Document to 'phase out fee-charging and integrate private schools within the local authority sector where necessary'.

○

The conference is one of the grand festivals in the annual educational calendar and the NUT invites fraternal delegates from all the other institutions in the English educational firmament – the DES (an official, not a Mininster), the local authorities and, above all, the Church. Canon Waddington, the C of E's 'Minister of Education', moved among his teacher flock with ease and style, an important reassurance against the incipient friction between his Church schools and the local authority-owned council ones – the twin pillars of England's 'dual system'. As numbers drop, Church schools (which can pick their five-year-old clientele on their own criteria) are becoming, in many areas, teeny-bop selective academies. The Labour Party is traditionally terrified of even raising this issue, vulnerable as it is to accusations of Godlessness. That is why I am immensely pleased that Canon Waddington is going to issue his own C of E Green Paper on the whole issue. I'm sure that even he may be accused of political bias by the odd bishop and the 'Christ was a Conservative' brigade in the House of Commons. But I think he can cope.

○

That other pillar of the system, the local education authorities, was also much in evidence in Jersey. But it was very conscious that cohesive, bi-partisan, local government power in England is weaker than ever. Derbyshire and Avon have resigned from the Association of County Councils and London Labour boroughs are going it alone and could well desert the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. Before long we could end up with what John Stewart (who professes local government in Birmingham) has prophesied for years – two local authority associations, one of Labour councils and the other of Conservative councils. Education now needs, more desperately than ever, a bi-partisan voice to out-face central government power. It used to have one in the Association of Education Committees, until a coalition of Labour and Tory city bosses killed it off, ten years ago, in the name of 'corporate management'. I hope it can be resurrected one day.

ROGER WODDIS

Waiting for Andrei

'They have the advantage and the preponderance.' – Francis Pym on Soviet military strength, after Gromyko's press conference.

How clear the gaze of Francis Pym,
There is no hope of blinding him,
He sees the problem at a glance:
'Advantage and preponderance' –
Deterrent X removes all stains.
But still a nagging doubt remains:
If we have less and they have more,
Why don't the Russians start the war?

Such thoughts on which our life depends
Are not for us to probe, my friends:
Our role in matters such as these
Means sinking slowly to our knees,
A proper posture to adopt
With those who like their logic chopped:
If we have less and they have more,
The world will end at half-past four.

They say a balance must be struck
Between the rouble and the buck:
We must negotiate from strength,
And we will go to any length
To gain the edge in overkill;
Though there's an unsolved puzzle still –
If we have less and they have more,
What are the buggers waiting for?

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Shaky regime

Raul Sohr reports on a dictator who is losing his grip in the face of a mounting economic crisis

WILL PRESIDENT PINOCHET still be in power on the tenth anniversary, in September this year, of his coup against the Allende government? Only a year ago, such a question would have seemed the most extreme, wishful thinking. General Pinochet was then at the head of one of the most apparently stable regimes in Latin America. He had successfully crushed all opposition – from the left; from the centrist Christian Democrats; from rivals within the armed forces. His team of monetarists – the 'Chicago boys' – was busy pushing through a series of wide-ranging structural reforms, not only in the economy but education, the labour movement (which they were trying to emasculate), the powers and duties of local authorities, the funding of social security programmes.*

Pinochet had the initiative, and he planned to stay in power for at least another 14 years, until his mandate finally expired (under his new constitution) in 1996. By then, he hoped that a new generation of leaders would have grown to maturity imbued with the ideology of his 'authoritarian democracy'. There seemed no serious challenge to his rule, and no coherent alternative.

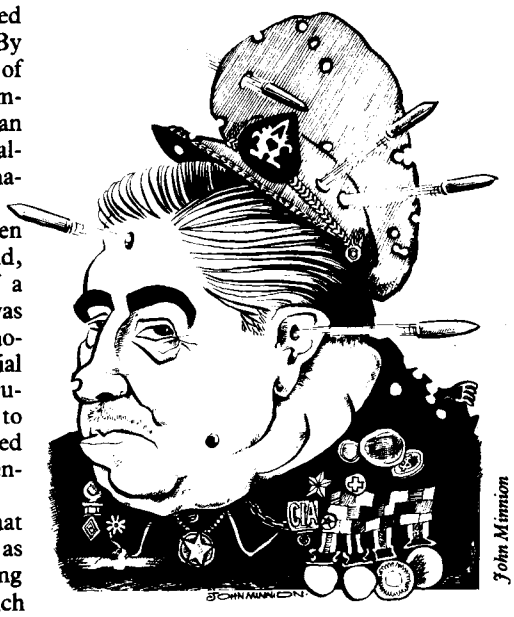
Yet, this year, Chile's capital has been alive with rumours: the President was dead, under house arrest, had been victim of a failed assassination attack; the navy was plotting a coup with the Christian Democrats; the head of the two biggest financial conglomerates, Javier Vial and Manuel Cruzat, were plotting with US interests to overthrow the President. What had changed so swiftly to shake confidence in the General?

The key change seems to have been that Pinochet has lost confidence in himself – as a result of his mishandling of the growing economic crisis and the opposition which this has generated to his government. His first serious error occurred last June when he denied any plans for a devaluation of the peso, gave his word of honour that no such plan was being considered, only days before his economic team announced a 15 per cent devaluation. Confidence was shaken.

Then, in the southern farming provinces (formerly a stronghold of support for Pinochet) local producers banded together to demand a ten-year moratorium on their debt payments, saying that the government should take responsibility. Pinochet responded swiftly and characteristically. He expelled to Brazil one of the leading members of the protesters, the president of the wheat growers' association, Carlos Podlech.

This dictatorial treatment of one of their number infuriated many right-wingers. Podlech's brother, who, as military governor in Cautin province, had overseen some of the fiercest repression after the 1973 coup, was moved to resign his post.

Pinochet went on to attack one of the central pillars of support for his rule – the two major national economic conglomerates, run by Javier Vial and by the Cruzat Larrain family. They had come to symbolise the 'free market' model adopted by the military government in 1975; indeed, they and their various advisers designed it, and several of those advisers, in various government posts at various times, administered the model to their benefit. By taking over control, in January, of several of the two groups' main companies and banks, Pinochet was signalling the end to that relationship, and to the entire model.



John Minnion

HE HAD LITTLE CHOICE. The two groups, between them, account for more than 30 per cent of Chile's foreign debt – a massive US$6 billion – and had little or no prospect of meeting their obligations this year. However, their international creditors were quick to let the government know that, if the companies defaulted on payments, there would be no more funds for any other Chilean borrowers. Pinochet had to intervene and take over the responsibility for the two groups' debts.

But Vial and the Cruzat Larrain clan are still powerful and will undoubtedly fight to protect their empires. If that means that Pinochet must go – in favour of some more flexible figure – then they are likely to add their weight to any move to oust him.

Other sectors of the right had come to the conclusion, some time earlier, that Pinochet had to go. These right-wingers – republicans, as they call themselves – include figures such as former President Jorge Alessandri and a number of former parliamentarians, who have suddenly regained their faith in democracy after a nine-year silence. Their idea of democracy is hardly Westminster; some of these figures are talking of a congress along the lines of General Franco's Cortes, or the mock parliament of General Stroessner's Paraguay, for example.

Nevertheless, they recognise that General Pinochet is not going to accept even these changes, and that if he will not, then he must go. They are now prepared to join forces with the once bitterly hated parties of the centre – the Christian Democrats – and even the left, to form a multi-party coalition (similar to the grouping which has emerged in Argentina). Its function would be to negotiate the army's return to barracks, the holding of elections and some form of parliamentary democracy. If such a coalition can be stuck together, it would represent about 80 per cent of the electorate, and would pose a serious alternative to the present regime.

There are still serious problems about forming the alliance. The Christian Democrats are the driving force and the single most influential grouping behing it, but they want to make a 'social contract' with the other parties, and with organised labour, to serve as a programme for the new civilian government – that they would expect to lead. They also want to exclude the Communist party from the alliance. Many left-wingers are opposed to both these conditions, though the Communists have said they are prepared to stand aside if this would bring down the Pinochet dictatorship.

Even if the opposition manages to find a formula round which to unite against Pinochet, his overthrow will have to come from within the armed forces. As an institution, their ambition is eventually to retire from government with their prestige intact, and with new, constitutionally guaranteed powers to intervene under a civilian regime. If Pinochet's personal position looks likely to endanger the survival of the institution, the moves to oust him will grow.

The process is being watched with care and attention in Washington, which would also like to see the powers and prestige of the armed forces preserved and an orderly transition to civilian rule negotiated. If the military model of government of the past decade is to be changed in Chile, as in Brazil or Argentina or Uruguay, there are strong lobbies in the USA who are anxious to preserve the guardians of authoritarian rule for future need. □

*See, for example, Education and Repression: Chile, *World University Service, December 1982, £1.95.*

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INDIA

Family feuding

Dilip Hiro analyses Mrs Gandhi's political weaknesses

Delhi

ON SUNDAY 3 APRIL, Maneka Gandhi, the widow of Sanjay, launched a new political party: the National Sanjay Forum. It not only has its own flag and youth wing – a common practice among India's proliferating parties – but also Sanjay *Sena*, Sanjay Army. However, with only two out of 542 MPs lending the party their support, Indian politics is unlikely to be very much affected.

Yet the new party is a major headache for Indira Gandhi and Rajiv, her surviving son. Maneka has thrown a gauntlet at them. She has announced that, at the next general election, she will contest Amethi constituency in Uttar Pradesh 'as a matter of principle'. This was her late husband's constituency; it later went to Rajiv Gandhi.

Such is the nature of the palace politics of India that neither Indira Gandhi nor Rajiv dares to refuse the challenge. In fact, this contest may well prove to be the test that Rajiv Gandhi will have to pass to prove his worthiness for premiership. The signs are unmistakable that he is being groomed for that top job.

Rajiv Gandhi has been assigned the task of rejuvenating the ruling Congress (I) party, a herculean job. By his own admission, the Congress has not existed as a functioning entity since 1969. Under Indira Gandhi's leadership, it has been reduced to nothing more than an election fighting machine. It has not had internal elections for the past 15 years and the Congress members in the state assemblies have lost their right to elect the leader – having, instead, to accept someone appointed from the top. No wonder factionalism thrives.

This is one of the reasons why, a few months ago, the Congress (I) lost elections in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, its erstwhile strongholds. The other factor at work was the rising tide of regionalism – most of the areas outside the Hindi heartland are affected by it, with Assam and Punjab leading the way.

Regionalism has both negative and positive aspects. It tends to thrive on hatred of minorities; but, at the same time, it stands for the preservation and enrichment of local culture. It is significant that both Assam and Punjab have powerful minorities: Bengali speakers in Assam, Hindus in Punjab.

Ultimately, these inter-group rivalries are rooted in economics. In Assam, the native Assamese find themselves fighting a rearguard action against further loss of land and jobs to the Bengali speakers. In Punjab – where Sikhs tend to be peasants and Hindus

Photo Mike Wells

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traders – the age-old friction between the peasant and the trader-moneylender manifests itself as a Sikh-Hindu conflict.

Three decades of mass education in the vernacular has created a strong sense of local identity, and an awareness of local tradition, in a large section of society. When many of those so educated fail to find a job, they tend to blame the 'outsiders' – those who do not share their own religion or language. This gives rise to a movement which advocates jobs only to the 'Sons of the Soil'.

The local bourgeoisie, too, has good reason to support regional loyalty. As aspiring middle-sized industrialists, its members find themselves in unequal competition with national business houses, which are well connected with the Delhi political establishment. They wish to keep the big industrialists out of the regions and exploit the local resources exclusively.

In agriculture, rich farmers resent Delhi's authority to fix prices for such commodities as rice, sugar-cane and tobacco. At the last state election in Andhra Pradesh, the local voters translated their feelings into action. They deserted the Congress (I) and backed the regional Telugu Desam party, led by the erstwhile actor, N. T. Rama Rao. They want the price fixing authority to be vested with the state government.

The only way the Andhra Pradesh Congress can hope to win back the voters is by supporting the demand for increased powers of the states at the expense of the centre. This means, in a general sense, that the Congress (I) must come to terms with regionalism by co-opting some of its features into its own politicial programme.

It must do so soon. The next general election is not very far away, and state-centre relations will be an important electoral issue. Although the present parliament's full term ends in January 1985, everybody in Delhi agrees that the next election will be held before then. Maneka Gandhi has put her money on the election being held by 'the end of this year'. It is an intelligent guess. New Delhi will be the venue of the next Commonwealth heads' conference in November 1983. The occasion, requiring the presence of the Queen, will add lustre to Indira Gandhi and help her to enhance the popular standing of her political party.

There is just one cloud in this scenario. If the forthcoming monsoon proves weak and, therefore, the crops poor, the food situation, already bad, could get worse. Even the presence of the Queen, decked with her glittering crown, would not be enough to offset the situation, thus forcing the election date to 'sometime in 1984'. □

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SOUTH AFRICA

Another victim

John Kane-Berman spoke to Mr Mkhize just before he was shot

Driefontein

ONE OF THE LAST things Mr Saul Mkhize did before he was killed by a shotgun bullet during an altercation with police in Driefontein last weekend was to write an urgent letter to the South African Prime Minister, Mr P. W. Botha, seeking his help. The letter was dated 31 March. Mr Mkhize died on 2 April.

Five thousand people in Driefontein, which is 200 miles south-east of Johannesburg, are threatened with removal to land that will later be incorporated into the 'homelands.' Mr Mkhize and his colleagues have been fruitlessly trying to dissuade the government from forcing them to move. They were particularly frustrated by the persistent refusal of the Department of Community Development, headed by Dr Piet Koornhof, to give serious attention to their pleas against forced removal.

The last straw was a speech by Mr M. J. Prinsloo, the local Commissioner of Dr Koornhof's department, to a meeting of villagers in Driefontein on 19 March, in which he told them that he had been instructed to inform them that the government had already decided that they must move and that there would be no further negotiations.

In his letter to Mr Botha, Mr Mkhize said: 'Your help is needed because we are being forced to move from our properties by the Department of Co-operation and Development. Dr Koornhof has been known to say "There will be no forced removal of black people from black areas" and yet here we are, without any real discussion, being told by his department that we will move, like it or not.'

The letter asked the Prime Minister to arrange a meeting for Mr Mkhize and other village leaders with Dr Koornhof. Mr Mkhize wrote that they did not wish to discuss removal, but:

> 1 Why we should consider leaving our homelands at all?
> 2 Why we should give up our legally owned property?
> 3 What reasons have the department for even thinking that we are prepared to allow them to intimidate us into such a move?
> 4 In view of the lack of co-operation from the department, why should they expect our co-operation?

Referring to threats that he claimed had been made against the community, Mr Mkhize asked Mr Botha: 'In God's name, Your Honour, is this merciful? Are these the actions of a man of God, such as I know you are?'

The letter went on: 'At present our people are hungry and short of water. Our boreholes are dry and we wish to arrange to have new boreholes but how can we do this under the present circumstances? We are, as all South Africans are, a proud people and all we ask is to remain so. We do not wish to be rebellious in any way but only to live our lives out in our own environment.

'We have formed a good community. We have inter-married with other tribes. We have been, and hope to continue to be, self-supporting and of benefit to the entire community, both through the land and factories in our area and also by contributing to the workforce very badly needed in places such as Johannesburg. All that we ask is that we have a reasonable and full discussion with a duly appointed body, by someone such as yourself, to talk to us. We know we must listen but we must also have every opportunity to talk and to explain our position. Your Honour, I beseech you to help us in this matter and to act on our behalf. We need your help and we ask for it now. Yours, very sincerely, Saul Mkhize.'

Mr Mkhize's death comes less than two months after his 17-year-old son, Paris Mkhize, was taken into a forest and beaten up by eight plain-clothes men, who kept on demanding of him: 'Why does your father not want to let Driefontein go?'

Paris claimed that the men, who apprehended him on his way home from school in Swaziland, identified themselves by showing him police cards when they ordered him to get into the bus which then took him into the forest. He spent that night in a cell in the police station at Piet Retief, a town near Driefontein. Mr Mkhize laid a charge with the police in connection with the alleged assault. On the last occasion on which I saw Mr Mkhize, he told me he and his son had three times gone to Piet Retief at the police's request for identification parades of the suspects, but that no parades had been held. □

ZIMBABWE

Tribal warfare

Naomi Mitchison has just returned from southern Africa

MORE AND MORE REFUGEES from Matebeleland – whole families – are crossing over into Botswana. They have to be looked after. The government of Botswana is going to find it difficult enough to feed its own people this year, but, if it were to ask for direct refugee aid, that would mean an equally direct criticism of its neighbour Zimbabwe.

Nobody in the Botswana government wants to see that. Yet these people come over with terrible wounds and bruises –

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which they didn't give to themselves – and terrible tales of suffering, which can't simply be propaganda.

No doubt some of the trouble is due to 'dissidents' – that is to say, people who disagree with the government; some who think it has gone too far in a socialist direction; others who think it hasn't; or others who simply think that they haven't got the good things they were promised after independence. But most of the victims are, I'm afraid, simply killed because they are Ndabele, not Shona. No doubt there are hidden caches of arms in Matabeleland and elsewhere. There are plenty in all the countries where people have got into the habit of thinking that the only way of ending an argument is by shooting the other person. No doubt, too, some of the mayhem is deliberately planned and carried out by South African agents, intent on destabilisation. No doubt, too, there are gangs of straight criminals on both sides.

Many of us had hoped that the stories of murder and destruction were not true. There are so many elements of success in Zimbabwe, including the friendly relations with the white community on all levels, something which at one time seemed impossible. There are the integrated schools, especially the exciting new production schools where, for example, a whole generation of children evacuated with their teachers to camps in Mozambique are now back (sadly, many are orphans) and so well motivated that they seem able to do well at exams as well as building classrooms, making furniture and school uniforms, and cultivating the land they have been allocated.

There is a brave independent paper, *Moto*, which has always gone in for informed and useful articles and is deeply anxious to help. Now this paper cannot but speak out about what is happening in the south. Will the government clamp down on it? I hope not, because, unless there is an independent press of some kind in a country, democracy of any sort is impossible. I cannot believe that Robert Mugabe would want to suppress *Moto*. Yet a Prime Minister cannot be everywhere. It appears that some of his ministers are only too easily sent into rages, followed by actions which get out of control.

Anybody who has had anything to do with Joshua Knomo knows that he can act very stupidly, that he listens to the wrong people and is too conscious of ancient glories. But I also believe that Robert Mugabe should be able to guarantee his safety in Harare and that they ought, even now, to meet. Yet it is not just a matter of leaders; it is a matter of remembering and emphasising old wounds, deliberately, as has been done in Ulster. If the Shona people can deal with this old enmity as quickly and decently as they have dropped their anti-white feeling, it will be a great achievement. I am a little comforted by an old friend, whom I met again after the 15 years when I was a Prohibited Immigrant in Rhodesia. He spoke warmly of Mugabe but, of certain others, 'They have no forgiveness in them' – and pressed my hand, thinking perhaps of the days when he himself felt that almost all whites were oppressors and enemies. □

ARMAMENTS

Converting swords

Denis MacShane reports on a recent conference

IN THE CONFUSED trade union world, where surface signals often contradict underlying reality, it is always difficult to identify a real trend as opposed to a fashionable cause. The issue of how to convert some or much of the arms industry to civil production, however, now seems to be reaching the point of take-off. The legendary Lucas Plan remains the start point and is the major inspirational model, but the idea of arms conversion is spreading out. TGWU regions are holding conferences for shop stewards and workers in the arms industry, as is ASTMS. A joint TGWU-TASS pamphlet is being prepared. Bill Niven, a former TASS official, now based at Sussex University's Science Policy Research Unit, has produced a sophisticated set of proposals to set up an interlocking network of national, regional and plant level 'conversion committees' which is being seriously considered by the Labour Party NEC and could be in the next election manifesto.

It would be fair to describe the Lucas Plan as the British labour movement's single most successful post-war export. In Europe – from Portugal to Poland – it has been translated and is regularly discussed.

In the United States, the major defence industry union, the one million strong International Association of Machinists, has commissioned studies on converting America's arms industries and is sponsoring a bill for Congress similar to Niven's proposals. In Italy, there is a similar push for legislation from the trade unions. In West Germany, the 2.6 million strong IG Metall union is organising special commissions to bring together workers from all the German arms manufacturing plants.

What has provoked all this interest? Some of the answers were provided at a remarkable conference organised by the Swedish metalworkers union in Gothenberg last month. Senior left-wing, including communist, and right-wing union officials from most West European countries and the United States sat down to discuss conversion possibilities with academics, the Swedish defence minister, Anders Thunborg, and rank and file workers from Sweden's own not insignificant arms industry.

The most chilling figures were provided by Seymour Melman, Professor of Industrial Engineering at Columbia University, New York. He argued that current US military budgets will absorb so much of America's fixed and working capital (quite apart from other technological, scientific, and human resources) that American manufacturing industry will go into an irreversible decline over the next decade. From 1946 to 1980 the budgets for the US Department of Defense came to $2,001 billion. The planned Department of Defense budgets from 1981 to 1986 are $1,600 billion.

Another way of presenting the problem is to compare military expenditure with the gross fixed capital formation of different economies. In 1979 (the last year for which figures are available), for every $100 of gross fixed capital formation in the United States, $33 was separately spent for military purposes. This compares with other countries:

	%
United States	33
Great Britain	32
France	26
Sweden	23
West Germany	20
Japan	3.7
USSR	60

But, added Melman, the figure for the US would go up to $87 by 1988, if Reagan's military budget is not trimmed.

The nature of military contracts based on cost-plus accounting means that the American arms industry, though technologically advanced, is relatively unproductive, while its absorption of so many other resources has weakened the rest of American industry. Melman concluded: 'Since the elemental task of an economy, any economy, is to organize people to work, it is evident that the military economy of the United States is an anti-economy. Independently of intention, the military economy of the US disables the competences ordinarily required for the conduct of economic life.'

Listening to these expert views were shop stewards from Bofors and SAAB-Scania and other Swedish arms manufacturers, who came diffidently to the rostrum to say, 'Yes, that's all very well, but we want to see our country defended and we don't want to lose our jobs.' In Britain about 400,000 people are directly employed by the government in the defence industry, excluding the armed forces. Many of the jobs are well paid, apparently secure, and often involve a personally challenging use of craft skills. To waffle earnestly about producing 'socially useful goods' instead, or to make comparisons between, say, Lucas involvement in missile guidance while thousands of kidney disease sufferers lack adequate dialysis units is to produce a set of obvious, self-satisfied points, but not to take the discussion further forward on what mechanisms can be found to advance arms conversion in practice rather than in theory.

Here there was a remarkable convergence at Gothenberg between the American ideas and those of Bill Niven. Both want direct government intervention in favour of arms conversion. Both are modest in suggesting that arms firms should allocate between one half and five per cent of existing R&D and production funds to seeking alternative products. □

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LETTERS

Sisterhood

Jane Miller, London E1

I would suggest that Liz Heron – in her article 'Sisterhood Re-examined' (*NS* 1 April) – is experiencing what she sees as the decline of the women's movement as a journalist and writer, putting an inordinate emphasis on a debate that is being argued out in some publications and not on what is happening day-to-day in the trade unions and local government etc. I just cannot relate to this experience. Last year might have been a year of reckoning in print, but non-fiction books and journals like the *New Statesman* are read by only a small number of people. I've never even heard of the book *The Cinderella Complex*. These publications are only for one side of the public arena.

As a socialist-feminist active in the labour movement I experience a definite sense of sisterhood and a clear focus for our activity, within trade union women's committees and courses. The reality of my experience is demonstrated by the positive achievements of the GLC women's committee and its working groups, covering widely different interests but working together to ensure that women's voices are heard in London. These things are just as much part of the public face of the women's movement.

The kinds of views put forward by groups like WAVAW are not new. Since I became involved in the women's movement in 1973 I've always been aware of strong opposition to pornography for being degrading and potentially violent towards women and an expression of men defining women's sexuality, but for a large number of feminists rape, porn and male violence are not the key issues.

I think the problem for writers and journalists is that in dealing with ideas in the abstract there's a need to develop the arguments in order to present an interesting debate. We as readers don't want to hear the same ideas constantly re-hashed. However, in our daily existence many feminists are certainly dealing with economic and political questions, and the publications to look at are the many excellent booklets brought out by the unions at the insistence of their women members.

Roads, rails and resources

M. J. P. Southgate, Director, Policy Unit, British Railways Board, London NW1

Alfred Sherman (Letters 25 March) criticises Mr Hamer for not being factually accurate in his article ('Think Tank Off the Rails', *NS* 4 March) but then goes on to support his case with factual inaccuracies.

He claims that BR accounts for some 95 per cent of all segregated way – in fact BR's route mileage is 10,831 compared with 1,770 miles of motorway. This is 86 per cent.

Mr Sherman is correct in saying that BR carries 10 per cent of combined inland passenger and freight mileage, but he omits to mention that BR achieves this on a network which accounts for only five per cent of the combined road and rail systems.

He also claims that nine out of ten people do not step on to a train in the course of a year. I do not know on what he bases this assertion, but recent market research for BR shows that one in three adults travel by train at least once a year (and many, of course, use trains much more often).

Dirty jokes

Shirley Henderson, Coordinator, Scottish Women's Aid, Edinburgh

I was appalled by the comments about battered women which Anne Smith slipped into her letter regarding pornography (*NS* 18 March): 'Why don't they just get up and go? They're a disgrace to their sex.'

Many women don't 'just get up and go' because they can't. It's just not that easy when you're faced with a mountain of difficulties including poverty, isolation, lack of confidence, social alienation, lack of alternative housing, not wanting to disrupt the children's lives, to name but a few. Women's Aid in Scotland alone gave refuge to nearly a thousand battered women last year – but we had to turn away the same number again due to lack of space.

Far from being a disgrace to their own sex, battered women are a disgrace to the male sex – living (?) proof of sheer victimisation and the abuse of power.

Battered women and women depicted in porn are linked both as victims of male violence and through their lack of choices. All women should have the freedom to choose those options which enable them to exploit their potential to the full. This includes freedom from male violence and freedom to define their own sexuality.

I'm glad Anne Smith is open to argument. I wish more women were afforded the same privilege, without fear of being beaten for their 'audacity'.

Seeing Green

John Bradbrook, Socialist Environment and Resources Association, London W1

In her letter (*NS* 25 March), Avril Fox makes a good point. There is indeed a tendency for socialists to go on about 'class' and 'the class struggle' as if these phenomena were inherently beneficial. Socialists often give the impression that they would be lost without them!

Yet there is also a sense in which socialism means the belief in the possibility of an egalitarian co-operative society. In that sense many people in the alternative society, struggling to put their co-operative ideals into practice are better socialists than are Labour politicians or trade union laders.

However, in comparing the political strategy of SERA with that of the Ecology Party in achieving what is indeed a common aim of an ecologically sustainable society, I would say this. It is easier (and in a way more ecological) to influence people's thinking than to shift their allegiance. As long as the labour movement remains the mainstream of progressive thought, representing the majority of non-privileged people, it is better to be in it rather than break way and form a rival concern like the Ecology Party. As long as we live in such an unequal society, egalitarianism remains important and needs to be made explicit.

In other words ecology and socialism need each other.

Nuclear genocide

Dora Russell, Porthcurno, Cornwall

The Nuclear Tribunal in West Germany which you report (*NS* 4 March) offers a first step in an entirely possible campaign to outlaw nuclear weapons of war.

Since nuclear weapons are genocidal and would thus destroy Germany completely, it was argued that a German soldier could not be held to his oath to defend his country. A true patriot must refuse 'nuclear service'.

When Bertrand Russell and Einstein issued their joint declaration against nuclear war, at the same date it was announced that the British Army of the Rhine possessed and if necessary would use nuclear weapons.

My son Roderick Barry, then due for military service, told his Tribunal that, though he was not a pacifist, he would not serve in an army which proposed to use genocidal weapons. His exemption, on that ground, was granted. But attempts then made by him and others to point out that the bomb was a reason for conscientious objection did not succeed. Letters to the press were not printed. Under no compulsion, he chose to do his service in the mines.

Perhaps this campaign, which is international in basis, to denounce the threat of nuclear genocide as not being a military weapon of war, may induce large numbers in all countries to make conscientious objections similar to that of my son.

An appeal

The Ruth First Memorial Trust

In honour of Ruth First, friend and colleague, who was assassinated in Maputo on 17 August 1982, we intend to create a resource centre to service and support the study of the history, economics and sociology of South Africa and of other countries in southern Africa. The centre will

- Be particularly concerned to copy and transmit materials concerned with such studies to institutions in Africa, and to make them available to scholars and others who are not affiliated to universities.
- Act as trustee for the papers of Ruth First and other papers and documents donated, lent to, or purchased for the centre.
- Establish the centre initially at a university or other suitable location in Britain where its collection can be housed safely until circumstances properly permit its transfer to South Africa.
- Organise occasional lectures in the name of Ruth First.
- Provide travel and research grants for suitable candidates to study at the centre.
- Fund suitable projects and, as appropriate, publish their findings.

We are confident that we shall have wide international support for our venture. Ruth was highly respected not only in much of Africa but at the United Nations, in Britain, in Scandinavia and America, and also in Italy, where she was a vice-president of the Lega di Diretti dei Popoli.

We have applied for charitable status for the Trust. Meanwhile, donations should be sent to: Ruth First Memorial Trust, c/o Ronald Segal, Old Manor House, Manor Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, UK.

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Sound of silence

Ken Johnson, Edinburgh

Caroline Berman's article about advertising on high technology (*NS* 18 March) reminds me that the original purpose of the Viewdata system (to be more precise, of its predecessor Teletext) was to provide subtitles for television programmes for the deaf and hard of hearing.

This technology has become another 'technological imperative' in true Concorde, Sizewell, motorway, etc. fashion. There is no evidence that anyone wants to buy the system except for specialised uses that could probably have been provided for with existing technologies like phones and newspapers. The Post Office has more or less given up hopes of a mass market for Prestel; in any case, its high charges and its abdication of responsibility for the accuracy of the material carried by the service would have made it more or less useless.

Meanwhile, although the BBC has spent at least twelve million pounds on the development of Teletext, the deaf and hard of hearing – whose dreadful isolation could have been considerably eased by the expenditure of half that sum on teletext subtitles – can watch, in a typical week, about seven programmes with teletext subtitles.

Perhaps those responsible for it should achieve their original objectives before going on to seek ways in which Prestel can be turned into a moneyspinner for future share owners.

Sex and the Tories

Denis H. Jones, SW6

Raphael Samuel (*NS* 25 March) is wrong to enrol Disraeli in a Conservative tradition of misogyny. Whatever his sexual nature, his preference for female company was well-known – women played a great part in his life as well as his novels. Michael Foot points out that he was regarded as a feminist, and one of his books hints at female suffrage. It should be remembered that he is now much out of Tory favour, being regarded as a prototype Wet.

More generally, Mr Samuel's article comes dangerously close to identifying homosexuality with woman-hating, despite his earlier linking of anti-gay and anti-feminist prejudice.

No six, please: we're French

Edward Rogerson, London NW1

Christopher Price (Diary 25 March) attributes altogether too much power to François Mitterrand. In spite of his long-standing objections to de Gaulle's presidential monarchy, he has so far proved unable to repeal the Gaullist constitution. France is still governed under the constitution of the Fifth Republic.

Northern Ireland

Conor Ryan, Dublin

Mary Holland's interesting analysis of the success of Provisional Sinn Fein (*NS* 1 April) leaves out one point. The success of PSF has been greatly assisted by the attitude of the SDLP itself and its imitation of the Provisionals' policy of abstention. The SDLP has refused to sit in the Assembly.

While one can argue about the usefulness of the Assembly, it seems that Northern voters have taken a logical step in their voting. The SDLP suffers from a lack of commitment to much else other than nationalism and the mythical United Ireland. If the voter is going to vote abstentionist, why not vote for the more radical candidate?

The danger of the proposed all-Ireland forum is that it will perpetuate divisions in Ireland, particularly in the North. The majority of people in the North see unity as a threat – no new Labour policy, declaration of intent, or all-Ireland council will alter that. Yet Northern Ireland has suffered worst under the policies of the present and previous British governments.

If the present British government, or indeed the next Labour one, wishes to do anything useful about the North, it should forget about the setting-up of talking shops of a sectarian nature – as the Council is – and should concentrate on the betterment of the people of Northern Ireland through economic improvements.

A majority of people in the Republic *do not* want unity if it costs them anything, as it invariably must. So the Labour Party would do well to examine the economic problems that drive people to vote for parties like PSF or the DUP and seek to solve them rather than foisting civil war upon the whole of Ireland – leading to the eventual repartition of the island – by perpetuating the myth of a United Ireland.

Setting-up a non-sectarian, properly equipped Labour Party there would be infinitely more useful than attempting to meet and even to praise the Provisional IRA's political wing. The SDLP has long failed to provide that role, as socialists like Gerry Fitt and Paddy Devlin well know.

Asbestos

David M. English, Councillor, Cardiff City Council

James Stewart's piece on asbestos in Cardiff City Council property (*NS* 11 March) cannot go unchallenged, since his distortion of the statistical evidence could otherwise worry unnecessarily residents of Calder-type houses on the estate for which I am a councillor.

The occupational standard for white asbestos fibres was reduced to one fibre per ml of air with effect from January 1983. This has been well publicised in both the technical and popular press. The fact that Mr Stewart quotes from a pre-January standard says little for his scholarship.

Mr Stewart quotes a 1976 recommendation of the US Institute of Occupational Safety and Health of 0.1 fibre/ml for all asbestos types. In fact, the standard in force in the US for occupational purposes is two fibres per ml for all types. Cardiff's Environmental Health Officer is using a standard of one-tenth the occupational standard for domestic surveillance – namely 0.1 fibres/ml for white, 0.05 for brown and 0.02 for blue. In the absence of central government guidance, I am satisfied that this is commendably cautious on the part of the officer.

Mr Stewart is more worrying in the way he deals with the Calder houses. The circular from the Health and Safety Commission was based on fibre levels of 0.5 fibres per ml. It was on that statistic that it stressed the risk to health could be neither confirmed nor denied. The tests on the Calder houses revealed levels of less than 0.01 fibres/ml of amosite – the highest level was 0.004 fibres/ml in the living area of one property.

Despite this minute proportion compared to national guidelines, the City Council nevertheless took the course of action recommended in the circular quoted by Mr Stewart. Surely that is acting as a responsible authority by any criteria and I can only express surprise that Mr Stewart didn't question our first-class EHO before rushing into print.

Asbestos was not found in the flue, as Mr Stewart states. Amosite asbestos was in fact found in the cupboard lining the heaters and remedial action is being taken by the council as a responsible authority. The asbestos is not in direct contact with the air flow to living spaces, but is emitted directly into the atmosphere.

There is no doubt there is a need for a competent medical review of the epidemiology of asbestos-related diseases, and my Labour colleagues on the authority look forward to the Health and Safety Commission review, which should be published later this year. But articles dealing with half-truths and unchecked 'facts' do nothing to help the case and only damage the otherwise respected reputation of a serious researcher like Mr Stewart.

Ed note: James Stewart will reply to Cllr English next week.

Apology

An article in the *New Statesman* of 17/24 December 1982 entitled 'From the Ashes of Beirut' was illustrated by a cartoon stated to be from the *Jerusalem Post*. As we acknowledged in the next issue, this was wrong as the cartoon, with a likeness of Prime Minister Begin perched on some skulls saying 'They murder men, women and children', had appeared in an Arab newspaper, *Al Fajr*.

We apologise to the *Jerusalem Post* and its editors.

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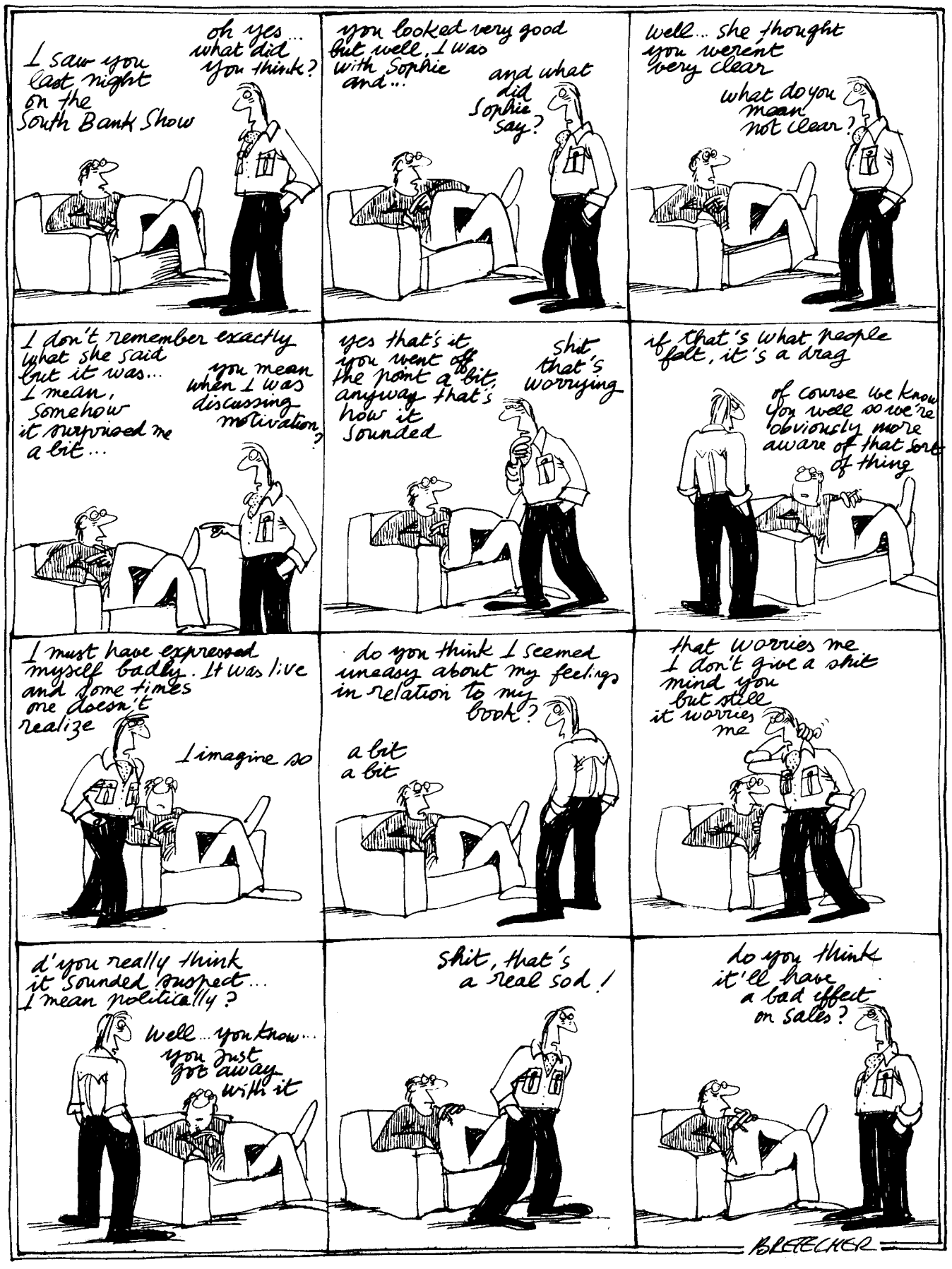

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Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800
KEITH THOMAS *Allen Lane* £14.95

Animals as entertainment – from Thomas Bewick's 'Bewick Gleanings' 1886

Christopher Hill

The man for the lion

Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic* is perhaps the most influential historical work published in English during the past two decades. Its only rival could be Edward Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*. *Religion and the Decline of Magic* changed our attitudes towards early modern English society by looking at its customs and beliefs with an anthropologist's eye. These customs and beliefs were not failed attempts to anticipate ours, not steps on a one-way ladder; they existed in their own right, had their own rationale, just like the customs and beliefs of a primitive tribe. A simple shift of vision; but early modern England will never look the same to those who have learnt from Mr Thomas.

Since then he has published a series of articles and lectures on apparently banal subjects like laughter or old age, subjecting them to the same treatment. Bringing together a great deal of information, much of it already familiar, he uses it to reveal a society so different from ours that it can be understood only after abandoning most of our preconceptions. Literary critics who study 'the words on the page' can read into them their own fantasies, ideals and presuppositions. They will get a very different poem from those who try to place it in its historical context – a poem which may convey more to them but which will be far from what the poet intended to convey. Keith Thomas's prodigious effort aims at getting behind the seemingly familiar phrases in which men and women of the past expressed themselves, and penetrating to the alien world of ideas which they inhabited. It is difficult to slough off assumptions which we regard as self-evident; but if we are to understand the past on its own terms it is an essential beginning. In the process we shall learn a lot about our own society and its ideas.

THE PRESENT volume derives from the Trevelyan Lectures of 1979. Its subject is attitudes towards nature in the 16th-18th centuries. Starting from a world in which men and women felt themselves to be close to, a part of, nature, Keith Thomas depicts an aggressive man-centred phase, asserting a deep chasm between men and animals. What Boyle called 'the empire of man over the inferior creatures' was justified by *Genesis*. Animals existed solely for humankind's benefit, had no rights or feelings of their own. But while Descartes was arguing that men were 'lords and possessors of nature' and that animals were automata, we encounter the first beginnings of 'one of the great revolutions in modern Western thought . . . to which historians have scarcely done justice' – 'the explicit acceptance of the view that the world does not exist for man alone'. Animals have feelings and should not be needlessly ill-treated: though 'needlessly' contains a world of ambiguity. This idea had been partially anticipated by Carolyn Merchant's pioneering *The Death of Nature*, published after Keith Thomas delivered his lectures, but his scope is much wider.

Humanitarianism starts from theology. Calvin objected to cruelty to animals. Puritans thought the Sabbath rest should be extended to animals. Radical sectaries during the English Revolution argued that 'God loves the creatures that creep on the ground as well as the best saints'. Some taught that animals had souls and would be resurrected at the last judgment, despite the problems of overcrowding this would create. 18th-century pet-lovers endorsed the idea with enthusiasm. But – ironically – as the difference between men and animals was eroded, a new racialism placed 'the lowest rank of men' close to 'the higher kind of animal': the black was pulled down to the animal level.

'It is impossible', Keith Thomas tells us, 'to disentangle what the people of the past thought about plants and animals from what they thought about themselves.' 'The rider of the great horse proclaimed both his social superiority and his conquest of the animal creation.' Breeding horses and dogs 'generated an extremely hierarchical attitude'. The social hierarchy among animals reinforced that among men:

> Here lies a pattern for the human race,
> A dog that did his work and knew his place.

The bulldog 'neatly united the twin preoccupations of the 18th-century ruling class: a concern with pedigree and breeding, and a taste for aggressive war'. The poor by contrast – 'ignorant, irreligious, squalid in their living conditions and notably lacking in some of the accomplishments supposed to be distinctively human: letters, numbers, manners and a developed sense of time' – were beast-like and were treated accordingly. Suckling babies was long regarded as a debasing animal activity, to be avoided by those who could afford a wet-nurse. 'The greater part' of the earth, it was asserted in 1609, was 'possessed and wrongfully usurped by wild beasts . . . or by brutal savages . . . worse than those beasts'. It was therefore right to dispossess them. The Irish 'lived like beasts'; so did American Indians.

There were of course other views. Poachers and the poor generally argued that pigeons and deer were God's gift to all men; the rich regarded them as private property, though Blackstone thought this unreasonable.

So Keith Thomas charts changing ideas and resistance to change. The microscope (revealing 'millions of animated beings') as well as the telescope (revealing possible

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other worlds) and geographical discoveries (revealing non-Christian civilisations and vast tracts 'created for no apparent human purpose') all helped to destroy the idea that God had created the universe solely for the benefit of man. 'When a lion eats a man and a man eats an ox', said Hobbes, 'why is the ox more made for the man than the man for the lion?'

'The triumph of the new attitude was closely linked to the growth of towns and the emergence of an industrial order in which animals became increasingly marginal to the processes of production.' Since this order emerged first in England, it was there that concern for animals was most widely expressed. Puritans and Quakers began to denounce hunting and horse-racing as cruel. The gentry were slower to take the point, but 'by 1700 all the arguments [against cruelty to animals] were there'. This concern became the speciality of the middle classes, whose criticisms were directed against aristocracy and lower classes. 'The S.P.C.A. can be seen as yet another middle-class campaign to civilise the lower orders.'

IDEAS derived from human society were applied to the vegetable kingdom too. In the 18th century a Lichfield botanical society organised plants hierarchically – grasses were 'plebeians' – 'the more they are taxed and trodden upon, the more they multiply'. Lilies were 'patricians', who toiled not neither did they spin. Funguses were 'vagabonds' – 'barbarous, naked, putrescent, rapacious, voracious'. Trees too had their social function. 'Long avenues radiating out from a single centre and stretching relentlessly over the countryside without regard to its natural features were a particularly obvious way of subjecting a whole district to the authority of the great house.'

The first naturalists learned from the lore of countrymen, who had a very large and specialised technical vocabulary, much of which 'had symbolic or emotional value'. But gradually a new Latin terminology was imposed which made communication between farmers and naturalists impossible. The import of new drugs from America and the Far East led to the discarding of traditional herbal remedies. 'The growth of a national market in plants and flowers . . . generated pressures towards standardisation.' 'In place of a natural world redolent with human analogy and symbolic meaning, and sensitive to man's behaviour', the naturalists constructed a detached natural scene to be viewed and studied by the observer 'from the outside, as if by peering through a window'.

As is his custom, Keith Thomas ends by leaving us a question to ponder about man's relation to nature:

> There was thus a growing conflict between the new sensibilities and the material foundations of human society. A mixture of compromise and concealment has so far prevented this conflict from having to be fully resolved. But the issue cannot be completely evaded and it can be relied upon to recur.

The book, pleasantly illustrated and with 100 pages of reference notes, is reasonably priced, no doubt in the correct anticipation of big sales.

I have summarised it as the best way of praising it. Its impact will perhaps not be quite so extraordinary as that of *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. But it will set historians and others thinking not only about early modern England but also about the nature of history itself – its methods, the evidence it uses. (Mr Thomas 'makes heavy though unrepentant use of literary sources of a kind not currently fashionable among historians'.) The elegance and wit of his writing are sustained, and the discriminating generosity of his references to G. M. Trevelyan are characteristically agreeable. Keith Thomas has, so far as that is possible, no ideological axe to grind; but he has a deep sympathy for the underdog, a desire to restore him to his proper place in the story of the past, and a deep humanity. □

Craig Raine

Arsehole

It is shy as a gathered eyelet
neatly worked in shrinking violet;
it is the dilating iris, tucked
away, a tightening throb when fucked.

It is a soiled and puckered hem,
the golden treasury's privy purse.
With all the colours of a bruise,
it is the fleck of blood in albumen.

I dreamed your body was an instrument
and this was the worn mouthpiece
to which my breathing lips were bent.

Each note pleaded to love a little longer,
longer, as though it was dying of hunger.
I fed that famished mouth my ambergris.

ARMS RACE
M. H. Ryle

Between the devil and ...

The Soviet Union and the Arms Race
DAVID HOLLOWAY *Yale* £7.95
Inside the Soviet Army
VIKTOR SUVOROV
Hamish Hamilton £9.95
With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War
ROBERT SCHEER *Secker* £8.95
Nuclear War: What's In It For You?
GROUND ZERO *Methuen* £1.95
Last Aid: The Medical Dimensions of Nuclear War
ERIC CHIVIAN MD, SUSANNA CHIVIAN, ROBERT JAY LIFTON MD and JOHN E. MACK MD (eds)
W. H. Freeman £15.80 & £7.40

Military historians and students of the USSR will find David Holloway's new book valuable above all for its exploration of the internal dynamics of Soviet defence policy. Holloway identifies a framework of 'institutional pluralism', not to be confused with the pluralism of Western civil societies, but in which wider foreign and domestic considerations do shape military decisions, and in which the Party has kept final control over the Armed Forces. This analysis, supported by detailed reference to Soviet publications, is the core of the book, and its most original element.

General readers, however, will surely pay special attention to the concluding pages, which assess the contemporary implications of Holloway's view that the USSR has had, historically, to adapt to a relative technological backwardness in a context of hostile encirclement. Now, with change in the Kremlin and a new lap of the arms race under way, Western policy may exercise a determining effect. If NATO considered unilateral moves to reduce its European reliance on nuclear weapons, this might initiate a process of reciprocal disarmament.

Holloway says little about the challenge of altering the Cold War status quo. Nor does he give much weight (as END, rightly in my opinion, has done) to the potential influence of autonomous eastern peace groups. His book is radical by the standards of NATO orthodoxy, but stays within familiar political parameters. Also familiar, this time direly so, is the rhetoric of 'Viktor Suvorov' (a pseudonym), Soviet emigré and ex-Army Officer; Suvorov's intense loathing for the Soviet system leads him to regret Hitler's failure to defeat the Red Army in 1942. Quite apart from its politics, and despite its often interesting (though often fantastic) factual claims, **Inside the Soviet Army** is too incoherent to be read as a consecutive work.

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The one memorable episode is Suvorov's first-hand account of the training of conscripts, a training praised by Defence Minister Ustinov as 'a wonderful school of moral purity and courage'. Suvorov gives the lie to such militaristic pieties, but he does more than that, for, as he relates anecdotes and snatches of conversation, his ideological venom fades, and we glimpse a landscape, fragments of a culture, people: the young conscript, for instance, who ticks off on the back of Marx's portrait the '103 Sundays left till my demob'.

SOLDIERS like this would not stand much chance in the nuclear war which, Suvorov claims, their commanders are eager to unleash. Without minimising the gross overkill of the Soviet arsenal, one can question such a view: Holloway demonstrates that Russian publications widely, and officially, stress the catastrophic nature of nuclear conflict. In the USA, meanwhile, 'war-fighting', or talk of it, is indeed on the agenda, and Robert Scheer shows, in his informative journalistic book, how this has been achieved. Scheer, who prints lengthy and revealing interviews with many US politicians (including the President), charts the rise to influence of 'neo-hawks' such as those in the Committee on the Present Danger and 'Team B' (a hard-line caucus which now oversees the CIA).

Their simplistic and obsessive anti-communism has provided the ideological basis for Reagan's foreign and military policy. Civil defence has been revamped (these are the 'shovels' of the book's title). A 'window of vulnerability' has been discovered – shades of Kennedy's equally unreal 'missile gap' – and a massive nuclear programme embarked upon to 'close' it. And, of course, a set of phony arms control proposals has been put together: the START proposals, whose bankruptcy as a serious negotiating position is made clear.

At worst, this might signal an intention actually to attack the USSR. It is good news, then, that organisations like Ground Zero are alerting Americans to the realities of World War III. Their book offers no radical critique of policy, and indeed accepts some contentious Pentagon axioms, but is a useful nuclear primer. Scheer does not, however, believe that the 'war-fighters' want actual war. Rather, they hope to coerce the USSR into a ruinous arms programme, and thus undermine its political stability. But if war is not the goal, it is a quite possible destination: the rationality of strategic calculation conceals, as ever, the irrational prospect of nuclear death. Whoever does not know what that death means, or has not sensed its bitterness – how impotent our cleverest or most desperate medical interventions are against our modern power to kill – should study **Last Aid**, which brings together the papers submitted to the first congress of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. The book's contributors include doctors from the USSR, the USA and Japan. Its power lies both in its expert and humane essays and in its unutterably distressing photographs. □

BIOGRAPHY
Christopher Barnes

Sister life

Boris Pasternak: His Life and Art
GUY DE MALLAC *Souvenir Press* £14.95

The problems of writing a life of Boris Pasternak are greater than those normally facing the biographer. There are enormous difficulties involved in acquiring a spread of reliable, detailed information about every phase of his life, and also in distancing oneself from Pasternak's own often eccentric views of his life and works. A poem of 1956 contained a statement of principle in its assurance that

> One should not bother keeping archives
> Or fussing over manuscripts . . .

And what has survived of Pasternak's correspondence, manuscripts and private papers has done so despite his own best intentions. He was notoriously unpossessive in his attitude to material property, including paper.

In later life Pasternak was inclined to dismiss all his earlier writings in favour of *Doctor Zhivago*, the crowning achievement of his old age. But despite the publicity and the critical accolade that greeted its appearance, the author's judgment of his novel has not been shared with wholehearted unanimity, and many people continue to prefer his earlier verse and prose of the teens and twenties. Furthermore, in the 23 years since Pasternak's death, the steady publication of hitherto neglected or unknown writings – or of 'lost' correspondence, such as the recently acclaimed one with Olga Freidenberg – convinces one that Pasternak was a somewhat unreliable judge of his own works' merits and of the value to posterity of his archives and many of his life's activities.

The tantalising awareness that something of importance may have eluded him thanks to Pasternak's wayward destructiveness or lack of concern is only one of the biographer's worries. He has been forestalled by his subject in a further respect: Pasternak himself wrote two autobiographies, *Safe Conduct* and a later *Autobiographical Essay*. These – particularly the former – contain passages evoking his earlier life with a bewitching brilliance that no cautious and objective biographer would dare, or be able, to emulate. They are consciously eccentric accounts, yet on some aspects of Pasternak's earlier years they are indispensable sources, and it is hard to read and use them without falling under the spell of their often quaint judgments, peculiar proportions, inaccuracies and omissions. In particular, after providing a memorable picture of his Moscow childhood, youthful friendship with Scriabin, philosophy studies at Marburg and Moscow, his literary debut and association with Mayakovsky, both of Pasternak's autobiographies are scant and selective in their account of events after the 1917 revolution. For Pasternak it would have been 'base and shameless' to write of the achievements and the anguish of those years in a way that did not 'cause hearts to falter and hair stand on end – in a manner less vivid than Gogol or Dostoevsky', and it is evident that ideological restraints and a genuine humility before this task intervened to prevent Pasternak's undertaking it. After 1917 the Pasternak biographer's task becomes therefore even more difficult and challenging. The Western researcher is left to deduce what he can from Pasternak's published works, and from such incomplete memoir, archive and epistolary materials as have become available; he can work with only partial knowledge of and access to whatever might have been preserved, or to people still surviving with memories and a story to tell.

Guy de Mallac's new life of Pasternak may not have overcome all of these problems, but it is nevertheless an impressive achievement, and it is the most complete account of Pasternak's life to appear so far in any language. Professor Mallac has studied Pasternak now for over two decades, and his painstaking researches and insights are amply in evidence both in the biography and in the second, interpretative section of his book, entitled 'Pasternak's Historical Universe'.

The one major fault in the biography is a too-ready acceptance of Pasternak's own versions of his life and work. There is only scanty coverage of the period of the First World War, and very little on Pasternak's perception of the events of 1917. There is plenty on his early passion for Ida Vysotskaya, but very little on the perhaps equally important relationship with his cousin Olga Freidenberg (family modesty?), while Elena Vinograd, the young woman who inspired his first and arguably his greatest book of lyrics, *My Sister Life*, is not even named.

The incident-packed and prolific 1920s are also allotted barely half the space devoted to the four (admittedly eventful) years of the *Zhivago* affair and its aftermath. Probably a work of even greater authority and completeness may eventually come from some devoted investigator in the Soviet Union, better placed to follow up the less accessible records of the author's post-revolutionary doings. Meanwhile, though, Guy de Mallac's life and perceptive interpretation of Pasternak will remain a permanent landmark in Pasternak studies. □

Rivals the best
of Stephen King
FEVRE
DREAM
George R R Martin
Gollancz £7.95

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FICTION
Roger Lewis

Merely players

Rates of Exchange
MALCOLM BRADBURY
Secker £7.95

The Little Drummer Girl
JOHN LE CARRÉ
Hodder £8.95

Slaka is a volatile state in the Soviet orbit. Its 'history is a mystery' because at various times it has been conquered by every tribe in existence. This quirky Ruritania is in permanent flux: the grammatical structure of its language alters overnight (the populace obediently setting aside time in which to change placards), there are several financial systems, and the world beyond the capital is shrouded in mystery. It is a landscape in which gross confusion stems from an attempt to be organised.

Into this world comes Dr Petworth, a minor academic from an even less exalted institute of higher education, a linguist despatched by the British Council on a culture tour. Much of his life has been spent exporting 'the ideal British product': the English language. Almost permanently on the move from country to country, he can discern only the drab similarities of his destinations rather than the exciting differences. As genteelly crumpled as his lecture notes, Petworth is menopausal, almost always fatigued, and never fights back when riled. Our hero in **Rates of Exchange,** with his paper-clips and Fontana Modern Masters, would seem almost wholly unappealing. Bradbury's success, however, is to conduct us behind the ungalvanic facade so that we come to realise that the meekness is in fact virtue. Petworth, 'a speech without a subject, a verb without a noun, certainly not a character in the world historical sense', is nevertheless the only still point in a convulsively turning world.

Into his latest novel Bradbury has hurled all his pet hates, coming to terms with what bores him by making it comic: airports, immigration controls, the chits without which we don't exist, weather, conferences, respectful students, couriers. His world is one where irritating fads breed like Ionesco's chairs. This would pall were Bradbury not able to turn it into a theatre of the absurd. He is one of life's ironists who has sundered his life into a pedagogical half and a creative half: six months a scribbler, six months a critic; a male Persephone. Which portion is more important to him? The answer lies in the paradox that in his novels he writes as a critic (where he gives the impression of being a wry commentator on his characters' activities rather than the inventor of them) and in his criticism he is enormously creative (making imaginative connections and absorbing himself in what he writes about). He plays one role under the guise of the other.

To depict Slaka he develops a style that easily allows both farce and seriousness. Intermingled with the jokes is a subtle disquisition about freedom and privacy. There is no unemployment in Slaka because everybody is officially occupied spying on everybody else. Rooms are abristle with sonic lugs and behind every mirror lurks a member of the secret police who minutely scrutinises one's ablutions. Watched in this way the citizens become actors, learning to disguise their real emotions with such skill that they don't know what an authentic feeling would be like. In this bizarre world of duplicity and stratagem the mild-mannered Petworth appears a subversive warrior. His gentle honesty, in the midst of such mendacity, seems like dissident troublesomeness. He is temperamentally unsuited to barter on this psychological rate of exchange.

His protective guides are in fact guards. Meant to show him Slaken life, what they really display is a pasteboard theatricality standing in for life. Relief comes from Katya Princip, a novelist who makes the book's key speech while perpetrating athletic rebellion in a soapy shower. She tells what it is like to live in a society where every move goes into the government files: the police 'have made your story, a bad novel, and you are in it forever'. The tales compiled by spies are more real than our own fictions. They dispel our protective fantasies which, in a free world, form our peace of mind: 'You can't remember any more if you have really an inside, or if the inside is merely the outside. You become like an actor.'

This is exactly the subject of **The Little Drummer Girl,** which marks John le Carré's graduation from the sophisticated puzzle to literature. Previously his genius has been to pander to our prurience and our sense of propriety both at the same time. We feel righteous anger at his moles yet are thrilled by their devilishness. We eavesdrop upon the secret world of Intelligence and are flattered to be invited to do so. *The Little Drummer Girl*, however, is not about the conundrum but the conceit. A series of bomb-attacks upon Israeli officials throughout Europe is investigated by Kurtz and his assistant Litvak, a pragmatic Laurel and Hardy, who plan not merely to track down the terrorists but to infiltrate the core of the illicit Palestinian organisation and explode it from within.

Charlie, a footloose actress with radical affinities, is taken up by a sexy stranger who gradually introduces her into a network of political altruism. She is schooled to succumb to the charms of a Palestinian guerrilla yet at a deeper level to be still working for the Israelis. She must be totally convincing in the one performance in order to gain an ovation in the other: a mole and a mistress simultaneously. The acting profession becomes an instrument upon which le Carré plays tunes about the concepts of loyalty, honesty and justice. He explores, in his precise, clever, unemotional way, the *As You Like It* idea of all the world as a stage. *The Little Drummer Girl* is his best novel to date. □

PAPERBACKS
Alan Brien

Hocus pocus

IN DECEMBER 1976, BBC TV broadcast a documentary, *The Bloxham Tapes,* which appeared to show various subjects, under hypnosis by Arnold Bloxham, regressing to the past and reporting previous lives. It was a dramatic and exciting programme, and the experience recalled by one of the participants, the pseudonymous 'Jane Evans', has often been cited since as probably the most compelling instance of reincarnation ever demonstrated.

Particularly memorable was her narrative in the guise of Rebecca, the wife of a wealthy Jew, as she was hunted down and killed by an anti-Semitic mob in 12th-century York. 'Jane' was not able to name the actual church in which she hid, but the clues she gave were sufficient for an academic expert to identify it as St Mary's. The only drawback was that St Mary's was not known to have a crypt. Then, in 1975, long after her tale had been taped, a workman involved in converting the church into a museum discovered under the chancel a chamber which matched her description. How could a woman today, who claimed in a voice-over to the programme that she had never visited York, reveal knowledge not even possessed by specialists in the period?

This case-history, along with a score of others, is painstakingly examined by Ian Wilson in **Reincarnation?** (Penguin, £2.50), the paperback version of his 1981 hardcover study originally called 'Mind Out Of Time?'

If the new edition had reproduced only the evidence in the earlier edition, there would still have been some doubts about 'Jane Evans's' accuracy. What was under St Mary's seems to have been a burial chamber, most likely dating from five centuries after the events she described. Nevertheless, her recall of the events remained vivid and convincing, without any alternative explanation of the sources she might unconsciously have tapped.

But in *Reincarnation?* – as a bonus for paperback readers who so often find their books substantially improved since first publication – Wilson adds a postscript on 'Jane Evans', based on the researches of Melvin Harris, a freelance radio and TV scriptwriter who also happens to be a lifelong browser in second-hand bookshops. He has unearthed, and Wilson prints in parallel columns, a series of correspondences between the tapes of 'Jane Evans' and various historical novels. These go far beyond any accidental repetition.

As maid of honour to Catherine of Aragon, she parrots whole sections of Jean Plaidy's *Katherine, the Virgin Widow* and as wife to the tutor of the Roman legate, Constantius, the future Emperor Constantine,

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she regurgitates whole gobbets of Louis de Wohl's *The Living Wood*. Even clearly fictional conversations, or invented characters, are incorporated, putting beyond argument that what she recalled under hypnosis were, consciously or unconsciously, memories of books she had read not lives she had lived.

Since 'Jane Evans' still conceals her identity, and has not made herself available for interviews as did the other subjects considered by Wilson, we have no idea of what her answer might be to the charge of mounting what, at the most charitable, might be now seen as an elaborate hoax. It would be interesting to hear, at least, from the producer, Jeffrev Iverson, whose book on the experiment (*More Lives Than One?*, Pan, 1977) took this and similar evidence so seriously.

The 'Jane Evans' story is typical of many manifestations of the paranormal that are spotlit by the media, presented in the most sensational fashion, listing only a handful of successes and ignoring repeated failures, deleting or editing out awkward inconsistencies, leaving behind in the mind of the casual reader or viewer a vague impression that here is something that science cannot explain. No matter how many times what has been trumpeted as at last the incontrovertible proof turns out to be the result of carelessness, fantasy, fraud, self-delusion or sheer invention, there is always a new revelation that has to be exploded.

Wilson's book is a classic of de-mythologisation in a single field, weighing the evidence with a scrutiny that is both impressive and enjoyable. I can only hope that there are still enough readers who find the cool-eyed exploration of reality as rewarding as the feverish hard-sell of the occult.

Compared to this open-minded pioneering, such simplistic accounts of re-incarnation as H. W. Hurst's **The Thousand Year Memory** (Sphere, £1.50), where every hit is celebrated and every miss is dismissed as an unfortunate slip, seem like catch-penny dream books for the half-literate. Hurst, incidentally, turns up in Wilson with a typical subject who remembers Thebes in ancient Egypt under Rameses III where he used a sestertius coin. Wilson points out the Egyptians knew Thebes, the Greek name, as No, the Pharaohs were not numbered except by Victorian Egyptologists, and the sestertius did not appear until the Roman era a thousand years later.

For a wide-ranging, pungent, combative onslaught on pseudo-scientific pretensions, shooting down the flimsy, media-hyped edifices erected in the kingdom of the paranormal, from ESP, biorhythms and psychokinesis to faith healing and psychic surgery, few better guide-books can be recommended than Martin Gardner's **Science – Good, Bad and Bogus** (Oxford, £4.95). Gardner prints all the objections, rebuttals, complaints of his victims in full, admitting his own errors and inaccuracies, overwhelming his adversaries in a glorious display of two-fisted dialectics. If he has a fault, it is to find some of the cranks and crooks too comical – 'hilarious' is a favourite word – following the motto of Mencken, 'One horse-laugh is worth a thousand syllogisms'. Nevertheless, the syllogisms are there aplenty.

Uri Geller is dealt many staggering blows, caught out in frequent lies and subterfuges, by Gardner. But for anyone with lingering feelings that Geller has some inexplicable powers, Gardner should be supplemented by James Randi's **The Truth about Uri Geller** (Prometheus, £6.95). Like Geller, Randi is a conjuror. And he has so far duplicated every Geller effect, even when known to be performing tricks before scientists warned in advance to watch for sleight-of-hand. Challenged by a parapsychologist to put his money where his mouth is in 1964, Randi has offered a standing reward of $10,000 to anyone who can demonstrate supernatural powers under controlled conditions. By 1982, 650 claimants had accepted, only 54 got past the preliminaries, and none has provided a convincing show.

In his companion work **Flim-Flam!** (Prometheus, £7.45), Randi covers some of the same ground as Gardner, but from a reciprocal angle, that of the trained fooler of the public who knows exactly where to look when the wool is being pulled over his eyes. He does not hesitate to blame serious, sincere scientists for their sloppiness and gullibility in the face of tricks a schoolboy could perform, or a willingness to authenticate claims they have investigated with minimum scepticism and few controls.

Together Wilson, Gardner and Randi provide essential weapons in the fight against superstition, credulity, cunning and simple-mindedness. Too often the unbeliever is forced to fall back on saying 'I don't know' when faced with what seem impregnable pyramids of evidence for some occult happening. Reading them, we learn how often we were right to stubbornly insist that a magical event couldn't happen because, when all the flummery and propaganda is cleared away, it didn't happen. □

ROCK MUSIC
Mary Harron

Girl talk

ELVIS COSTELLO has a wonderful song called 'Girls Talk' in which the male narrator strains to hear what the girls are whispering about across the room, driving himself into ever madder circles of paranoia – *what are they saying about me?* How men talk about women is well documented; if men knew how women really talk about them, they would probably shoot themselves.

You can hear girls talk on the debut album by **Vanity 6.** These three American girls – Vanity, Susan and Brenda – are the protégées of funk's *enfant terrible* Prince (of whom more later), and reflect his lurid, naive exhibitionism. The presentation suggests a calculated marketing plan: song titles like 'Nasty Girl', 'Wet Dream' and 'Drive Me Wild', publicity shots decked out in lacey camisoles and suspenders, with challenging, come-hither poses.

To start worrying about sexism in the face of this neon-flashing vulgarity does more than state the obvious: it misses the point. There were moments when this album reminded me of a scene in *Chicken Ranch*, the television documentary about a Texas brothel. In this scene the girls were lounging about in their tawdry negligées, shrieking with giggles in a curiously boarding school atmosphere: alone together, all the venom and resentment poured out as they verbally ripped their male clients apart. Vanity 6 don't see themselves as victims of men: they're 'nasty girls', not whores. Men are the quarry here, but they appear as the haziest images: what is real and vivid is the picture you're left with of three girls in a bedroom on Saturday night, trying on make-up and bitching about guys.

The nagging question with Vanity 6 is how far their image is controlled by Prince. The publicity has it that 19-year-old Vanity, 21-year-old Brenda and 16-year-old Susan (yeah, sure) were discovered by Prince in 1981; thrilled to discover a girl group whose explicitness matched his own, he set them to work with another set of protégés, The Time, as a backing group, and now uses them as his opening act.

Prince has just produced the best funk album of the year, **1999;** he wrote the songs, arranged them and played every part, and is far and away the most interesting performer in the field today. He represents a new breed of avant-garde funk which connects with the rap records coming out of New York, in which the most off-the-wall sound effects, musical dislocations and studio treatments are becoming commonplace. Funk has become as much a studio art (and a producer's art) as dub reggae; it has smudged the distinction between art and popular music because the disruptive approach that was once used by avant-gardists for some purist, deeply theoretical explorations is now being used by musicians like Prince for commercial purposes, as dance floor effects.

The boy is a master of production. But what is most bizarre, and most newsworthy, about Prince is his fusion of traditional soul and the 'nihilism' and 'decadence' of what Americans call the New Wave. That's punk, to you. It's Prince's own feverish fantasy of what punk is, a video-arcade, porn-shop dream that locks into his own childish obsession with talking dirty. A friend of mine summed up the image perfectly as 'Peter Pan comes to Times Square'.

Soul has always been most explicit about sex, and traditionally sex is presented not just as the best thing going, or the source of all heartbreak, but as a duty and a right. The men swagger on stage shouting 'I'm going to do you right' or words to that effect; the women fold their arms and say 'not right enough'. With Prince the old identities have been smashed up and reassembled. On stage he prances about in make-up, jock strap and leg warmers like a bastard son of Little

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Richard, making extravagant sexual promises and febrile suggestions in a falsetto whirl. Prince's orientation is, to put it sedately, pan-sexual: he wants his mother, his sister, his sister's boyfriend, anyone going. But most of all he comes across like a little boy running back and forth displaying his penis – 'See? *See?*'

If this is ludicrous it is also a genuine obsession and that makes it a creative, driving force; along with his other obsession, which is the apocalypse. *1999* opens with a vision of the holocaust translated into disco terms: '2000 zero zero party over, oops, out of time/So tonight I'm going to party like it's 1999'. Judgment day is coming, he says casually, but 'Life is just a party and parties weren't meant to last.' The song has already been in the charts, a thunderously effective dance-floor hit. And if the song '1999' is disturbing, the lyrics become progressively stranger until the album ends on a note of total dementia, in 'Lady Cabdriver', a song I wouldn't even attempt to describe.

So where do Vanity 6 fit in? Their album credits them with writing their own material and you will find no trace of Prince's nuclear visions, or any of his excursions into politics. The production is credited to 'The Starr Company' which I take to be a pseudonym for Prince; it bears his stamp.

The most useful parallel I can think of is the relationship between Phil Spector and his girl group, where he provided a context and a sound. (And in Spector's case, of course, the songs as well – but with girl groups whether or not they write the songs makes curiously little difference to what is being said.) Both take female stereotypes and a clearly prescribed female area: make-up, the bedroom mirror, the telephone, dates, gossip, rivalry and pursuit. And somehow through those clichés something authentic emerges – partly because we live with and through clichés – of what female experience really is.

Vanity 6 haven't made pop classics to rival the Ronettes, but there's something there. The stereotype they're working with is a *Penthouse* centre spread, but like the Sixties girls who filled the image of the lovelorn highschool sweetheart, they've made it their own property. Not entirely, of course. They sound forced when they imitate some of Prince's swagger – or perhaps they're just trying to live up to the male fantasy of the hot, insatiable bitch. When Vanity breathes 'I need seven inches or more', it's risible. That's not how girls talk, it's how men want to think girls talk – but then that song is addressed to a man. □

Among this week's contributors:

CHRISTOPHER HILL's books include *The World Turned Upside Down* and *Milton and the English Revolution*.

CHRISTOPHER BARNES is Lecturer in Russian at the University of St Andrews; he is currently at work on a life of Pasternak to be published by CUP.

CRAIG RAINE's most recent collection was *A Free Translation* (Salamander, 1981).

THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

Closed circuits

King Lear
SHAKESPEARE *Channel 4*
Julius Caesar
SHAKESPEARE *Stratford*

When Laurence Olivier last played **Lear**, in 1946, it wasn't generally rated one of his greater successes. The young Kenneth Tynan thought the performance consisted only of 'a few tremendous tantrums of impotence and an infinite run of cadenzas on overworked tricks', such as 'ceaseless fits of wrestling with his cloak, like a tortoise with claustrophobia'. Well, the old boy was barely 39 then, and may be presumed to have learned a thing or two about age, pain and even the art of acting since. What's to be said, then, of the Lear that time and sickness obliged Olivier to bring to the small screen rather than to the open spaces of the theatre named after him?

He strolled gently into what appeared to be the centre of Stonehenge, his face fresh, pink and untroubled beneath a white mane, a cross between a baby and Spike Milligan. Then Anna Calder-Marshall's Cordelia had her say, and his chuckles of self-satisfaction and gurgles of self-congratulation turned to a curious blend of bleat, whine and whimper, a capsule sound that was to become increasingly familiar in the scenes ahead. It was cleverly done in itself, but it didn't begin to embody the caprice, arrogance, venom and violence that must characterise the early Lear if Cordelia's rejection is to be believed and his own spiritual regeneration is to mean as much as it should. Nor were those qualities particularly noticeable in the great scenes on the heath, though that may have been partly because Olivier's rage had to compete, not only with storm and tempest, but with an unusually obtrusive musical score. Instead of the charismatic king *in extremis* we'd looked for, we mainly got a somewhat soft-headed OAP, the intermittent squeak and whinny in his voice betraying his imminent descent into second childhood, his querulous distress the sort you'd expect if a particularly obstructive official were behind the pensions counter at the post office.

In my disappointment I found myself concentrating more and more on those around him, notably Diana Rigg's Regan, with her social-worker's voice and death-ray looks. Michael Elliott's production was very well cast and in many respects very good. For instance, by focusing tight on faces and figures and treating even the lush English countryside as casually as any painted backdrop, it did much to solve the perennial problem of putting a non-naturalistic play on to a medium with an inbuilt bias towards naturalism. And in the end it solved the problem of its perilously low-key Lear. At Dover, Olivier disembowelled a rabbit and ate its liver, which seemed over-literal as well as unhealthy; and then, just when one was giving up his performance as an interesting but unexciting and distinctly unmoving failure, he launched into a remarkably intimate scene with Leo McKern's bloodily bandaged Gloucester. He cradled and kissed the blind and grizzled head, sniffing, laughing, hiccuping, and even finding some raw passion in the great denunciations of privilege and authority.

It was touching, very touching; and the scenes with Cordelia that followed were beautifully gentle and, finally, awesome. The high, senile quaver in Olivier's voice suddenly transformed itself into a long animal wail – 'Howl, howl, HOOWL'; and then, out of the now-distracted chuckles, out of the helplessness, came that five-times-repeated 'never', each blunter in its recognition of his daughter's death, the last as factual and final as a pathologist filing his report from the mortuary. It was foolish to be surprised, because the one predictable thing about Sir Laurence has always been his unpredictability. We should have guessed that he would score at precisely those points where his talent is supposedly weakest but TV strongest: those demanding contact and inwardness, telepathy and soul.

No doubt he would have given us another Lear in the theatre, and no doubt it would have been more plausible in more places. But his portrait of (and this, finally, is the emphasis) a woozy dotard, a complacent old narcissist taught by suffering to see, hear, understand and love – well, it's as life-sized, as accessible, as *human* a performance as I've seen Olivier give.

Ron Daniels's production of the *Dream* grew, or grew on me, with its transfer from Stratford to London; and perhaps the same will prove true of his **Julius Caesar**, a confection with its tasty bits, but one that doesn't seem yet to have gelled or set. There's a fine, paranoid Caesar from Joseph O'Conor and a fine, tough Portia in Gemma Jones; but Peter McEnery's Brutus is too dark and withdrawn a presence to sustain our interest, and both Emrys James's romantic, excitable Cassius and David Schofield's sybaritic Antony have moments of disconcerting artificiality, actorishness. Nor was I vastly enamoured of Daniels's attempt to link 44 BC with 1983 AD by dangling a TV screen from the flies, to show us Caesar's murder and the speeches of Brutus and Antony in simultaneous close-up. It didn't add a lot of facial nuance, and it encouraged silly, irrelevant thoughts, such as (my own case) wondering when Jimmy Hill would come in to talk us through a slow-motion replay of the game's feats and fouls. See Casca ghosting in at the back there? What a striker! Almost Brazilian in his ability to twist and turn. And here's Brutus charging into the penalty area. Caesar jumps and stretches out his arm. What a glorious save that would have been! But, no, it's there. *Et tu, Brute!* He completely outclasses Metellus Cimber and the rest of his team-mates, don't you agree, Jimmy Greaves? □

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FILMS
John Coleman

Wedlocked

Best Friends (PG)
Warner West End; etc.
Smithereens (15)
Screen on the Green; ABC, Edgware Road
Pixote (18)
Gate, Notting Hill; Classic, Oxford Street
The 5000 Fingers of Dr T (U)
ICA Children's Cinema

There are fugitive signs, tremulous portents that Hollywood, realising extra-terrestrials, schlock-horrors and Kleenex-soakers may not be enough to keep audiences pinned to their seats for ever, is looking back in admiration to the bickering, amorous comedies of the Thirties and early Forties. Only last week Marshall Brickman's pretty disastrous *Lovesick* kept sending out false echoes, as if it were the dud re-make of some best-beloved oldie. Now we have Burt Reynolds and Goldie Hawn, no mean charmers and comedians, matched up in **Best Friends**; and Norman Jewison, the piece's director and co-producer, making affectionate reference in interview to 'the wit, style and candour of the Thirties', adding 'although we're much freer today to deal with taboos'. Maybe the breeziness of that extra clause was a mistake, converting into a chill wind, because – to leapfrog over pious aspirations to the brute heart of the matter – Mr Jewison's romantic comedy is no world-beater, either. Hawn and Reynolds play a successful pair of screen-writers who work and lovingly live together until the fateful day the man urges the woman into marriage. She consents – no taboos here – as they share a shower, exacting the promise 'we won't tell anyone'. Of course, they have to.

Written by Valerie Curtin and Barry (*Diner*) Levinson, out of similar real-life experience (never a guarantee of excellence), the story's core is the belated honeymooners' trip to their respective families or in-laws to break the news and rupture their now legalised relationship in the all-too-predictable process. Hawn exhibits an adolescent *pudeur* at her aged parents' single-bedded house in sub-zero Buffalo, oddly at variance with Jessica Tandy's genial sexual outspokenness as her ma: pa reads concealed porno mags, she confides, with 'real beaver shots'. And when daughter finds pa pursuing the cleaning woman, Hawn showing authentic pain at this and Reynolds confusion at her clamming up, ma is steadfastly sprightly: 'I think it's wonderful he keeps trying.'

On to the Reynolds parental flat, stuffy, cluttered, in a giant condominium in Virginia, to be greeted by his jittery ma at the door, flashing her omnipresent Instamatic, and a sister on her latest divorce chatting about her ex's inadequate 'pea-pistol' over dinner. Here Hawn watches balefully as her man copies his dad's macho eating habits, and others; is left miserably high and dry at a big restaurant party the mother insists on throwing; finally blows it by gratefully gobbling valium until she subsides, face-down in her chicken salad, while on a shopping spree with the women. Back home again, rain drips into the confounded couple's new house. Separation looms until a last, locked-room stint on a script reconciles them.

There are a lot of good-to-splendid bits in all this, as one might hope. A chic Hollywood eatery where the jungly flora swamps the tables; a giggly registry office wedding, with the Spanish-speaking smiler's shot at 'I thee endow' causing bafflement: these add gaiety and edge. But the would-be rib-tickling discomforts of a three-day train trip, all awkward arms trailing from couchettes, cramped shaving and tiresome fellow-passengers, are mishandled grievously; and indeed any overall orchestration of mood and tone is lacking. Now and then Goldie Hawn, with that soft crinkled sprawl of mouth and gauche grace of gesture, entrances as of old, when Burt Reynolds makes an agreeable laid-back foil. But she is also required to go straight-faced, mature and aching – and does this very well, too. It's just that something less signalling than all the planted references to marriage-on-the-rocks and what wedlock becomes 40 years on is required to hold the fragments funny and fragments peculiar, even disquieting, together. It could be that word Mr Jewison caressingly invoked, alas: 'style'.

Susan Seidelman's **Smithereens**, giving itself carte blanche in the title, is nevertheless more of piece. An independent New York production, made for $80,000 and looking a few thousand better, it skitteringly follows 19-year-old Wren (Susan Berman), a short-skirted little loud-mouth from New Jersey, as she vacillates round the Big Apple in search of fame and fortune, but mainly a bed for the night. A snarly and skint rock star (Richard Hell) and a trailer-camped nice guy from Montana (Brad Rinn) are the blokes she bounces between on her downward path. There is much noisy music and rough humour and raw energy. I thought it a sleazy number about birdbrains.

Sleazier, and masquerading as something more soul-searching, is Hector Babenco's Brazilian **Pixote**, an unaccountable critical triumph in New York and Los Angeles. After a start in a reform school, which has a promising and politically fizzing semi-documentary feel to it, this 'exploration' of the plight of homeless lads under 18 – available for criminal exploitation since they cannot be prosecuted – degenerates into a catalogue of the violent antics of a quartet of boys on the run: of these, the homosexual whore Lilica and 10-year-old Pixote are the most picturesque and affecting. The kids, in fact, do their stuff. The director, one suspects, does us. For lighter though decidedly bizarre fare, to which Londoners might well send their more privileged kids, there is a welcome revival of the 1953 Dr Seuss-based musical fantasy, **The 5000 Fingers of Dr T**, an erratic treat for TV-sore eyes. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Barking

I'VE BEEN trying to buy a bed and I was interested in the heavy-set gentleman who comes on to say that if you have a partner heavier or lighter than you are you can get their side of the bed made differently. I wonder can you get their side made cheaper? Some people have a partner who could sleep on a hedge. If you had their side made really scrappily, perhaps you could afford to have your own side pocket-sprung.

BBC-2 had a half-hour commercial for Selfridges on their **Just Another Day** series. It made canny use of the fact that even a department store is more interesting than television. I particularly enjoyed the aggressive female store dick from Germany: 'I vos pitten in ze arm von time!', she exclaimed. 'I vos told I should be put in ze ofens. Zis voman vos carrying ze banana. She slipped on ze banana and bite me in ze leg!' I wonder is the world all slapstick to some people. There isn't enough of it on television.

'We've just introduced this classic-look pet coffin', said a man from Pets, showing a little temple. 'It's all cardboard, bio-degradable.' A man went past with his hand between a model's legs. 'This camel is hopefully going to blink *and* chew', said a window dresser. 'And not just up and down, from side to side, like this.' He imitated the camel. A serveuse was seen dashing round spraying people. 'You have to be careful who you spray', she said. 'It can be humiliating.' She ran off. 'Are you happy?' a man in the barbershop was asked. 'No', he said.

Stan the Lift didn't rise to the occasion either. But Maurice the Post, a self-created Norman Wisdom chappie, was solid showbiz, which happened to be exactly the angle Selfridges was seeking to promote: the show must go on, etc. All the same, he'd got into trouble once, he said, for singing to a manageress in Umbrellas.

> 'Were you like Norman Wisdom before?'
> 'Only since I came to the store.'
> 'So. You've worked at it?'
> 'Worked at it? I've put my heart and soul into it.'

Battersea Dogs Home made another programme in the series. Battersea is the place where escaping dogs are interned until their owners come and 'rescue' them. Shots of depressed dogs being 'found' by ghastly owners in an ecstasy of remorse, sniffing their coats, etc. The red setter looks hopelessly at the camera-crew: caught again. One millionaire diabetic dog was kept alive at the home for eleven years on insulin. The film showed his mistress unveiling a plaque to him in the home's surgery: 'In memory of

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Roger Cosmo, diabetic dog, who died peacefully in his mistress's arms.' She also endowed a Roger Cosmo scholarship for a full-time vet to be installed at the home.

A MORE obvious plug, but one which fused, was the full-length ad for the Conservative Party laid on by ITV. Bringing their **No. 10** series up to date, they got Margaret Thatcher to play 'The Woman in No. 10'. Her leading man was her own creation, Sir Laurens van der Post, wearing velvet elephant strides. 'How nice of you to see me, ma'am', crawled the oddly attired knight, puffing up the stairs to where she was standing. 'How nice of me to sit here', I thought as the preliminary insincerities turned into elongated winsomeness. Bores make hypnotic TV, of course. You sit there wondering what agony at a childhood tea party drove them to this blindness of themselves.

Van der Post, billed as conversational co-star, was almost speechless at Mrs Thatcher's grasp of the cliché and platitude. 'Your father was a cobbler', he interjected at one point, as if to shake himself from a trance. But he'd got it wrong. 'No, he wasn't,' said the PM tartly. What he was I've forgotten, but whatever it was he proved his worth, she said, scraping the barrel rather for a compliment, by saving. Saving money, I suppose. Her first memory was of 'going out for a walk and just looking round.' Hard to imagine but still.

After the ads – 'The cuffs of Jacky's school shirt, the seat of Jimmy's play-suit' – it was time for the tour. 'That's Pitt,' said Maggie, 'our Prime Minister when we won the battle of Waterloo. When I came here we had no original pictures of Nelson or Wellington. Now we have. Look at that sensitive face . . . 22,000 dead in two days.' We took in the Duke's haughty expression. 'There's only one thing worse than a battle lost,' said Sir Laurens, piously quoting from the Duke, 'and that's a battle won.' 'Yes,' said Maggie in a voice that meant 'Yuk!'

She showed us an English sideboard, slightly warped, which she'd ordered in to replace a foreign, rococo thing. Then it was into the cabinet room for greatness. 'It's been re-upholstered, of course,' she told us, indicating her own place, 'but this is the chair that Winston sat in.' Finally, it was album time. 'This one was taken when I was married', she said. 'To Denis.'

Like Mrs Thatcher, the Pope has risen to the top of his strange profession by hard work and ambition, and everything he now does is necessarily a part of that success. I think it was this which disgusted me when I saw that rounded, silk-clad celibate kissing the feet of twelve 'selected' orphans for Easter on **News at Ten** (ITV). They sat on a platform like shoeshines, so his holiness wouldn't have to bend, and they looked embarrassed as hell. Did they want to come that day? Was it unpleasant for them, or inconvenient? Why didn't he *wash* their feet? And where were the twelve little girls, I wonder. □

MUSIC
Andrew Clements

Driving force

Gruppen
Barbican

The London Symphony Orchestra's tenancy of the Barbican's concert hall has just entered its second year, with gloomy pronouncements on falling attendances and the need for the orchestra to plan its concerts along more popular lines. Certainly the novelty of the place wore off unexpectedly quickly, and the LSO has never recaptured the audiences it had for its initial season there. But last week's performances of Stockhausen's *Gruppen* at least came close to regenerating some of the original excitement, for all the rumours of its cost in *Private Eye* and a notably philistine feature on BBC-2's *Newsnight*. The single criticism that can be laid on the LSO during this last year is that its playing has veered between competent and dreadful; for *Gruppen*, however, the players were alert and accurate.

Gruppen was the early pinnacle of Stockhausen's achievement in instrumental music during the 1950s, the most ambitious total serial score then essayed. It demonstrated conclusively and thrillingly the ability of the new, supposedly arid language to generate large-scale structures, while early in its composition Stockhausen conceived the idea of spatial separation to articulate the layers of tempi that his techniques implied. The three orchestral groups have become the main feature of the score, as well as the barrier to wide performance. The first British performance took place in Glasgow in 1961, four years after the premiere; the BBC staged it at the Proms in 1968. Yet even the expanses of the Albert Hall did not allow the orchestras to be disposed as the score specifies, with the bulk of the audience within the triangle formed by the three platforms; at the Barbican this was finally achieved with the aid of two specially constructed stages.

It brought the piece to life in a way that could hardly be suspected from the essentially two-dimensional stereo recording that was all we had for 15 years. The statement-and-response antiphonies that go back in Western music to the Venetian Gabrielis and Monteverdi here assume a vital part in the musical fabric, into which the listener is inextricably drawn. Gestures are echoed and developed across the hall and at one point merged into a continuous sound mobile circling round and round in densely packed brass chords; single instrumental lines suddenly crystallise out of tangled ensembles. Encountering *Gruppen* for the first time in the flesh, one is struck by the intimate, chamber-like quality of much of the writing, distance lending entrancing mystery to some of the textures. Stockhausen, alone in his generation, had the ability to combine the monumental with the personal. Had Stockhausen attempted such a work later in his career, the result might well have been more colourful and unexpected, but it would surely have lacked the cool elegance shown here, passionate involvement of the cerebral with the physical.

Claudio Abbado was the driving force behind the Barbican performance. He took charge of the central orchestra, flanked by Edward Downes and James Judd. There were three performances, the first an open rehearsal combined with a lecture, the remainder forming the first part of a programme with Brahms to follow. I heard the first of the two concerts; coordination between conductors seemed thoroughly rehearsed, the orchestral playing was vivid, almost too aggressive in the percussion.

If *Gruppen* was unquestionably the best thing the LSO has done at the Barbican so far, its presentation still raises questions about the way in which 20th-century music is packaged by the major orchestras. On paper at least the combination of Stockhausen with Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* and *St Antony Variations* might seem to offer something for everyone. But the Brahms was not substantial enough to attract anyone who might be suspicious of Stockhausen, while those who were eager to hear *Gruppen* generally left immediately afterwards. Might a better plan not have been to couple the novelty with some more rarely performed 20th-century orchestral repertory, of which Abbado is a fine interpreter? Then at least the majority of last week's audience would have got full value for its money. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2765 **Set by P. W. R. Foot**

'And the village green that had got mislaid/ Turned up in the Squire's backyard.' Surely Chesterton would have been even more scathing about Greenham Common. Not more than 16 lines of verse on this topic from him, Byron, Blake or Shelley, by 22 April.

No 2762 **Set by B. Mooring**

Verse incorporating car-names.

Report **By Len the Unlucky**

Fall-out from our recent limerick comp continues to drop as the gentle rain from heaven upon this unlucky head. For one thing, as you may have guessed, the thing was heavily censored by Mr Bowdler and Mrs Grundy; libertarians have taken exception to this (particularly to the omission of the one about the 12-inch cylindrical ruler). As if that weren't enough, Gerard Benson and others have pointed out that one of the winning entries was first published in 1927. My only consolation is the knowledge that this week's car-name comp is oojah-cum-spiff. Numerous hon. menshes: Jimmie Pearse, M. R. Macintyre, Paul Berman, P. Taylor,

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D. Toley . . . not to mention Alex Galloway, who ended on this evocative couplet:

The hours we spent supine (we thought it heaven)
In English mud, under an Austin Seven.

A quid for that: eight each for those below.

I'm *toledo* you are the *manta* see,
So can you spare me *alfa* tick?
I guess you *mazda* heard *ami* –
I tend to get a *lada* stick!
Murdoch's the name, and dirt's the game –
Look, *passatt* ashtray wilyya *sport?*–
You got it, *datsun* Aussie name,
I reckon it must strike *accord?*
Now, Hughie, we could *sierra lot*–
Us press barons must stick together!
I'll buy your 'Statesman' like a shot–
I'm goin' for it, *elf* or leather!
Of *corsair* would be minor moves
I *opel* suit you pretty well–
We'd sack that buncha left-wing pooves,
And Woddis – he's borin' *gazelle!*

I. D. BEARDS

I play *golf* and *polo*, with partners or solo,
On *Alpine* or *Dolomite* slopes,
Among grazing heifers, where balmy Spring *zephyrs*
Are *heralds* of amorous hopes.

On the *Metro* in Paris, akin to Frank Harris,
I spy a young *minx* who entrances;
So, *imp*–like and *sprite*ly, I pepper her lightly
With *cavalier, rapier*-keen glances.

This sexily skinny young girl in a *mini*
I *escort* at once to Durango,
Where after siestas we dance at *fiestas*
And '*Vivas*' resound as we tango.

Next we fly to *Granada*, but what's getting harder
Is only the effort to please her,
Till the *maestro* lies limp while some greasy young pimp
Steals the warrior's laurels of Caesar.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

The party was a *triumph* at the start
And *Robin* acted like the perfect host,
With *astral* light my eyes had pierced his heart!
(Or so he said when he proposed a toast.)
Then *Cressida*, to *popular acclaim*,
Brought forth the *cherry* cake and fish-paste *rolls*,
And those who felt like joining in a game
Played *polo* on the lawns, or *golf*, or bowls,
But *Bentley*, as a *prelude* to the dance,
Took round these trays of super plonk we'd made
From *Alpine* flowers Nanny'd picked in France,
And things, I fear, got out of hand a shade.
Belle, the *minx*, in a *mini* far too short,
Made *Robin coltish*, *cavalier* and rude!
Some *imp* was in that wine, for then I caught
Nanny and *Bentley*, romping in the nude.

N. J. WARBURTON

Audi-do, love, there *yugo*,
Porsche another drink–
Monza Southern *Comfort* – wo!
Datsun uff, I think!
Avant we before tonight
Met ro-mantic'ly?
That's *safari* remember right–
Three cheers to corps d'*esprit!*–
Oh off *fuego, saab* bluddy rough
Ocean *rolls* about,
Mazda drunk some funny stuff
– 'Twas *zephyr* thus, no doubt.
But *visa* proper drinks, oh hell
Ital you, I feel sick,
Wish the room would stay *estelle*,
Excuse me, please. *Bu-ick*.

WILL BELLENGER

This *zephyr*'s an *avenger*, punishing
The *popular cherries* for their forwardness:
To *herald* the *fiesta* of the spring
So soon was just to *prelude* their distress.
Like *hunters* on *safari*, the winds smash
Through the thick *laurels;* startled *robins sprint*
Under the hedge as *minor* branches crash
Down on unbudded *violets*, and dint
Cushions of *midget alpines; beetles* scurry
Into the *silver shadow* of a wall,
As their *horizon*'s lost in a snow-flurry
Of flakes that *samba* in a sudden squall.
Now the storm retreats behind the hills;
It's sunny, and the birds *acclaim* the calm:
They sing as I pick flattened daffodils,
Then swoop to do the crocuses more harm.

MAY DAY

FIRST PERSON

Bill Greenwell

A load of rubbish

BUFFALO BILL was blessed, in the Vatican, by Pope Leo XIII. Surprised? I was. I paid a fiver years ago for the shock, when I picked up his tour brochure, complete with programme. A genuine end-of-century find, mint condition, from the year after Sitting Bull was bumped off by Federal agents. It has a picture of Annie Oakley. It contains an article quietly deploring the Sand Creek massacre. And it advertises 'the most famed vehicle extant' – the Deadwood Stage, which was captured and recaptured in style before that 'enthusiastic horsewoman', Queen Victoria.

I like to shell out on stuff like that. It's stuck up on a shelf now, gathering dust – or it would be if it weren't wedged up against other tattered trophies. Here's the first twenty issues of *Which*. A signed picture of Fay Compton. And an 1889 poster for the New Theatre, Oxford, advertising one Duprez, 'the Celebrated French Illusionist and Humorist from the Polytechnic, Paris'. There was a worker; he did a thousand consecutive performances in Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. 'Never was such a success known', it says. And that poster is mine. Everything about it is original except the sellotape that's holding the thing together, that and the blu-tack stains on the back. It was all right when I found it; but I don't think I'm cut out for this collecting lark.

They get me, collectors. The -ologists and -ilists in full frenzy, plundering piles of rubble in the second-hand emporia (second-hand! – most of the tat has been fingered more furiously than a common florin), dragging some impossible object to the light while I'm still wondering if the proprietor's alive, kicking a slow-motion bucket, or merely on display. Up they come, like grubby dolphins from the deep, honking for the obligatory fish. Out with the loose change, and giggling outside the shop. They've found it! The 1949 offside gizmo that fits the bill, the gubbins that makes the set a Set, or would look good in the grotto of objects already festering in their front rooms! They get my goat, or rather they don't, since mine came out of the Corn Flake packet in early '59, and I'm hanging on to it till I've got the whole farmyard.

What do they know that I don't? It's a mania. I sit in a room, any room, flicking my eyes surreptitiously around to see if there's an Object Worth Collecting. There has to be something they haven't thought of. Cigarette cards, all right cartophily – before my time. But there were three books of Green Shield stamps in the window in Exmouth last week, wrapped in cellophane, I swear. I should have snapped them up, I might have had a *bona fide* bargain there. Every time I chuck something in the bin, I have a second squint. Will they be selling mint condition Munchies boxes at Sotheby's when I'm putting in for the pension? Or was it that late '82 Rizla packet, slightly foxed, was that the thing that'll be calling the auctioneer's bluff in the third millennium?

My mum gave all my Famous Fives to the League of Pity. Pity. There'll be a market for thirty-fifth impressions when I'm scraping the barrel for beer-money.

Fruit-machine tokens? The tops of Twiglet boxes? Banana biros, plastic? Skateboards? Bus-tickets? A complete set of Penguins, the biscuits, not the books, they've been on to those for ages. Eh? I've plenty of things, you see, but they're falling apart at the seams, edges, patches, the glass is broken, or the cats got at them. I can't seem to find that perfect possession that comes in numbered sets or serious series.

When I go junk-hunting, I come away with junk. It's interesting, true – take the Buffalo Bill business – in the fading twilight of a Saturday evening, after a scrimmage in the boxes and bins. I get to read it, rummage in it, rattle it, or rattle on about it to a clump of bored acquaintances – 'You won't believe this, but Pope Leo XIII . . .' – but I've got this nagging feeling that there's a big beanstalk I've always missed barking up.

But then I only go and sit on it, squash it, tear, tarnish, trip over or tread on it. You won't catch me dropping it in the dustbin, not after I've spent the weekend's whack of the wages on it. But there's no market in it. It'll turn up in a trunk when my great-grandchildren are rooting about in my remains, worth an idle note of surprise – 'At Tiffin, Ohio, Annie Oakley shot a ten-cent piece held between the thumb and forefinger of an attendant at 30 feet! Listen to this!' – but never legal tender. And I own the whole Top Twenty from September 1967. Most of the Fifty, matter of fact. Worth a fortune, so a magazine told me – 'perfect'. Mine are as scratched as well-scrubbed milk-pans. □

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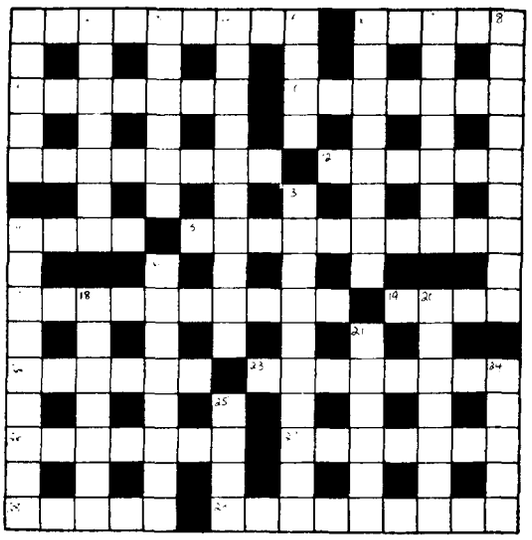
Weekend Crossword 1396

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1396, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 19 April.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

ACROSS

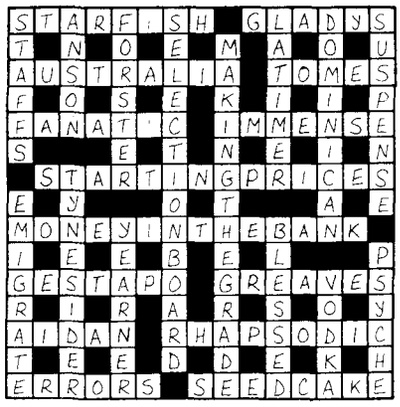
1 Philosopher well caught out? (9)
6 Cut like eight (5)
9 To pick an international is just a whim (7)
10 Freshly classifies places to stay at (7)
11 Renegade discovered in a country without a river (8)
12 Potential of a red hat (6)
14 Time for something to eat (4)
15 Material for fool as well as prophet (10)
17 They keep the books and start with a balance (10)
19 Get rid of a building (4)
22 Backing a racehorse to make a killing (6)
23 Acted when it was dark inside and was thus incapacitated (8)
26 Hurrying to make the drink on the gas? (7)
27 Dog and dog cut short (7)
28 Dynasty which has another one in the middle (5)
29 Usually makes a man recover (9)

DOWN

1 Entertainer given a single drink (5)
2 The left on strike in sympathy (7)
3 Prepares for publication about a hundred orders (6)
4 In desperate circumstances there is unusual merit in sex (2,8)
5 Play soldiers as a regular thing (4)
6 Boat in which a Nazi goes round the country (8)
7 Wizard composer (7)
8 Lost hope when six (9)
13 Money is tin for the religious (10)
14 See children after a party in the mountains (9)
16 Iron is used in the construction of this place (8)
18 Castle is an article with two counters on (7)
20 Bag seniors entering college (7)
21 Being distant about one's anger is more just (6)
24 The heart is everything, so exchange caresses (5)
25 Biblical character who makes a joke (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1395



Prizewinners to 1395

Mrs D. C. Dunn (Luton)
Mrs Jean Fones (Dudley, W. Midlands)
John Peterson (Dundee)

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Deadline for ads – Normally noon Tuesdays for publication on Fridays

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SUMMER 1983 IN ALBANIA
Three escorted tours visiting Durres, Tirana and Saranda
Price: **£410 for 12 days**
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Atol 856

JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA. Low cost flights, holiday journeys. 3-6 weeks. JLA, 10 Barleymow Passage, London W4. 01-747 3108

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to teachers, M.D.'s from Holland, Germany, Scandinavia, UK, France, etc, in holidays or rent their homes, no vat. International circle, 5000 members; also arrangements for paying guests.
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MOSCOW £165, KIEV £155: 28 May-7 June
MOSCOW £180, KIEV £170: 30 July-9 Aug, 13-23 Aug
By SLEEPER EXPRESS, Budapest/Moscow
FULL BOARD & SIGHT-SEEING INCLUDED
SPECIAL REDUCTIONS FOR GROUPS OF SIX
YORKSHIRE TOURS
49 Thornton Lodge Road, Huddersfield HD1 3JQ
Phone: 0484 24269

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Staying at Tignale sul Garda
Hotel supplies all breakfasts and dinners
INCLUDES Touring programme
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LAKE BALATON & BUDAPEST. 28 May-6 June. £135
Full board. Lakeside hotel near SIOFOK
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INCLUDES full touring programme
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Phone: 0484 24269

YUGOSLAV RIVIERA (RAB) 15-27 June £145, 27 Sept-9 Oct. . .£160
INCLUDES full board and coach excursions
Ten nights in YUGOSLAVIA
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Conferences

PROGRESSIVE LEAGUE CONFERENCE. 'Influence of the Media'. Speakers: Celia Fremlin, Gareth Griffiths (Press); Brian Murphy, William Belson, Hugh Thompson (Television) 6-8 May, Chelwood Gate near East Grinstead. £38. Details Jack Small, White Cottage, Burtonhole Lane, London, NW7. Tel. 01-959 3725.

POVERTY OF POLITICS
What future for the poor?
Conference organised by Child Poverty Action Group
Sat., 16 April, 10am-5pm
ULU, Malet Street, London
Speakers include: Rodney Bickerstaffe, David Blake, Anna Coote, Jack Dromey, David Owen, Hilary Rose, Peter Shore, Peter Townsend.
Details from: Alan Booth, CPAG, 1 Macklin Street, London WC2, 01-242 3225.

Poetry

OUTPOSTS POETRY QUARTERLY. Poems invited for future issues and/or annual Poetry Competition (to celebrate **OUTPOSTS'** 40th anniversary in 1983, prizes will total £3,000). For details send s.a.e. to: 72 Burwood Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 4AL.

Publications

FOR A SCIENTIFIC way to transcendence, without god or faith, read Western Buddhist Magazine. For details write to: Western Buddhist (Dept 5), 30 Hollingbourne Gardens, Ealing, London W13 8EN.

MIDDLE EAST catalogues available. A. C. Hall, 30 Staines Road, Twickenham TW2 5AH.

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion Street, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822.

Financial

IMMEDIATE ADVANCES £100-£25,000. Written terms on request. Regional Trust Ltd, 31 Dover Street, London W1A 4RT. 01-491 2934.

SALARIED PERSONS Postal Loans Ltd. Loans from £50. 175 Regent Street, W1. For written quote apply: Tel. 01-734 1974.

SAME DAY LOANS and postal loans unsecured: £100-£200. Secured loans. £1,000-£100,000. 100% mortgages arranged. For written quotation: Richmond Investments, 4 The Green, Richmond, Surrey. 01-940 2929/9835. Established 1934.

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To book your ad in the NS Festival Feature on 22 April
Tel: Laura Berryman
01-229 2001 ext. 229
before 15 April

Personal

AFFECTIONATE, HUMOROUS, gentle lady sought by similar male, twenties. Interests include books, music, countryside, rambling conversations. Do write. Box 5729.

ARE YOU a lively minded individual, aged 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, communications, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and Intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL MAN, (55), seeks attractive woman of any race (young to 47 approx.) for warm-hearted friendship. London and surrounding areas. Box 5742.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating Dept. (NT), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011.

DON'T BE DECEIVED by my easy-going appearance. I am a woman who likes the good things in life and am looking for a warm, intelligent, interesting man, 40-60, to share them. Box 5743.

DRISCOLL HOUSE, 200 single rooms, p.b. £40 p.w. 172 New Kent Rd, London SE1. 01-703 4175.

EDUCATED, ATTRACTIVE lady, wishes to meet professional gentleman, age 40 onward. Box 5731.

ENTERPRISING, HONOURABLE, virile man, 62, writer, seeks friend and partner, for lifelong business venture. Box 5733.

EXPERIENCED, CARING PSYCHOTHERAPISTS. 01-794 6810, 01-586 4109, 01-883 5418.

HERPES: *The Facts* – the book that lays the myths to rest and puts the illness into a sensible perspective. Penguin £1.50. Or in hardback from The Penguin Bookshop, 10 King Street, Richmond, Surrey. Price £4.95 plus 50p P. & P. Access and Barclaycard welcome.

HUMANISTIC RESEARCHER London, male, 34, would like to hear from a woman. Box 5738.

ISOLATED HOMOSEXUAL women read Sequel Magazine. Reply: B/M Sequel, London WC1N 3XX.

LONELY? Why not join London's Friendliest Singles Club, making new friends of all ages? City Circle. 01-388 9273 (9 a.m.-6 p.m.).

MAN, 37, teacher, writer, seek woman to share life's triumphs and disasters. Box 5748.

PERSONAL STATIONERY. 100 printed letter heads, 100 plain, 100 envelopes. Black type on white bond paper (A5 size) only £9.90 inclusive. Send your details with remittance to: Deltaprint, (NS), FREEPOST, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 3YB. Tel: 061-427 4706.

PIANO TUNER, reliable, North London only unless repairs needed. Denys Parsons MSc, 01-340 4695.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, 26, South London, leftish, interests include travel, music, people, pubs, conversation, seeks compatible, sensitive woman in/around twenties for warm relationship. Box 5739.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, 28, seeks male companionship. I hope I am warm, open, intelligent and tolerant. I like books, children, the countryside. If you are warm etc and interested please write Box 5750.

PROGRESSIVE East Midland lecturer and journalist (late middle-age), fond of family life, walking, skiing, travel and books, seeks the friendship of a warm and intelligent lady. Box 5728.

SCANDINAVIA'S LEADING correspondence magazine read in 100 countries. £2.50. Penfriends (NS), 45 Sandringham Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 3RZ.

SINCERE MALE, 29, short, cuddly, considerate, unfettered, newly arrived Birmingham, many interests, seeks lively, sensitive, not unattractive female, for lasting relationship. Any offers? Box 5746.

UNIV. LECTURER, female, 38, formerly political feminist, idealistic about social change, now spiritually searching, seeks male correspondent/confidant, to help in search for enlightenment. Box 5747.

WOMAN BASED London, slim, interested social science, especially psychology, films, theatre, food, relaxing, seeks man 48-53, unattached, to explore caring, sharing relationship. Box 5749.

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You can still **ADVERTISE FOR AS LITTLE AS £5.20.**

LISTINGS

FRI 8 APR

LONDON Nicaragua public meeting. Four years of revolution threatened by invasion. Spkrs from Central America, Caribbean and British labour movement. 7.15pm County Hall, York Road, SE1 (Waterloo tube). **Org Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign.**

8-10 APR Days of Action at Daws Hill Peace Camp, High Wycombe, Bucks. **Contact Sean Hawkey, Bourne End 22624.**

8-10 APR LIVERPOOL Conference on Teaching and Learning about Northern Ireland. Christ's College. **Org Peace Education Network. Details: Stefanie Duczek, 64 Monkgate, York 0904-51456.**

SAT 9 APR

EDINBURGH 3rd National Convention of Campaign for a Scottish Assembly. Key spkrs. 10am-4.30pm Assembly Rooms, 54 George Street. Fee £2 delegates & observers/25p students & unwaged. **Org Campaign for a Scottish Assembly. Details: Val Marshall 0382-542197.**

9-10 APR LONDON Solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese people. Two-day conference. British spkrs, spkrs from abroad & UN observers. 10-5.30pm County Hall, SE1. Credentials £1 per delegate from LIBERATION, 313 Caledonian Road, N1. **Org CRS London Political Committee/LIBERATION 01-607 0465.**

SUN 10 APR

LONDON Holocaust Memorial Evening: 'A Shop in the High Street' (1965). Moving Czech film of life under the Nazi regime. 8pm 37 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6. **Org Mapam.**

MON 11 APR

LONDON 'Feminism in 19th Century England'. History Workshop Seminar. Spkr Ros Delmar. 7.30pm Black Horse pub, Rathbone Place, W1.

TUES 12 APR

LONDON 'Greenham women defy the state' public forum. 7.30pm Camden Labour Club, Carol Street, NW1. **Org North London Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!**

WED 13 APR

LONDON Exhibition (for 2 weeks) of children's work on peace. Adm free. Opens 2pm Wood Green Central Library foyer, N22. **Org Haringey Teachers for Peace. S. Nouling 01-883 6511.**

LONDON The arms race and its implications for Europe. Talk by Frank Barnaby, ex-Director, SIPRI. 7pm Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. **Org London END.**

LONDON Farewell to the working class? Andre Gorz in discn with Hilary Wainwright & Elizabeth Wilson. Chair: Robert Hutchison. 7.30pm, Seminar Room, ICA, The Mall, SW1. Adm £1.40 + 50p ICA day m'ship. **Contact Lisa Appignanesi 01-930 0493.**

THURS 14 APR

LONDON Socialism and the women's movement. Public forum with Susan Ardill, Spare Rib, and Christine Moss. 8pm Prince Albert Pub, Wharfdale Road, Kings Cross, N1. **Org Socialist Party of Great Britain.**

FORTHCOMING

15 APR London Red Rope (socialist walking & climbing club) grand disco. Bar and raffle. 8pm-1am The Factory, Matthias Road, N16. Adm £1.75 waged/75p unwaged. **Details: Joyce 01-889 9106.**

16 APR Hastings. Robert Tressell Memorial Lecture: Robert Tressell and the Trade Unions in the 1980s. Spkr Norman Willis, Dep. Gen. Sec. TUC. 3pm White Rock Pavilion, Lower Hall. Adm free. **Org WEA Hastings Branch 0892 32354.**

18 APR for 6 weeks. Radical change in the 80s – course on new directions in work and relationships. Mondays 1-3pm Hammersmith Unemployed Workers Centre, 446 Uxbridge Road, London W12. Free. Org through WEA. **Details: Jocelyn Chaplin 01-743 8124.**

20 APR-11 MAY London. See Red Women's Workshop exhibition – 7 years of women's posters. Cockpit Gallery, Princeton Street, WC1. Opening party 21 Apr 6-8.30pm

21-23 APR York 2-day workshop for teachers, development educationalists and theatre-in-education workers. Contributions from Urban Zebra, Moving Parts, Leatherhead TIE team, Oxfam, Theatre Centre. **Details & application forms from Tony Humphries, Education Officer, Africa Centre, 38 King Street, London WC2.**

22-24 APR Salisbury Friends and Allies weekend conf for community artists and workers in related fields. Workshops & seminars. Invited contributors. St Edmunds Arts Centre, Bedwin Street. Creche. Adm £7.50. **Org Association of Community Artists. Details: Marion Rose 01-722 5686.**

23 APR Leeds. Seminar on Psychological Aspects of the Nuclear Threat. 9.15-1pm. Clin. sci. Bldg, St James's Hospital. Fee £2. **Org North & West Yorks. Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons 0532 780274.**

28 APR London Public meeting Greenham Common and Labour. Guest spkrs Helen John and Anne Cesek. 7.30pm Islington Central Library, Holloway Road. **Org Islington South & North Labour Parties.**

30 APR Poplar New Worker International May Day Celebration. Films, videos, folk groups, revolutionary singers, political rally, play. Bookstalls & refreshments. 2-11pm Poplar Civic Hall, Bow Road, E3. Adm £1/students, OAPs 50p. **Org New Worker newspaper.**

1 MAY Rhondda 1983 Arthur Horner lecture 'Marxism and history'. Spkr Prof. John Saville. 8pm Mardy Hall, Rhondda. **Org LLAFUR/Mardy NUM Lodge. Details: Neil Evans 0766-780363.**

1 MAY Leeds Pavilion feminist photography centre opens. Photographic work still welcomed for open submission show on feminism and photography. Deadline for entries 30 May. Entries (with SAE) to 2 Chestnut Avenue, Leeds 6. **0532-787987.**

6-8 MAY Reading. Women for Peace weekend workshop. Spkrs; creche and accommodation available. **Org Reading CND, PO Box 158, Reading, Berks (SAE please). 0734-61361.**

7 MAY Brockwell Park. Youth CND Festival. **Org CND 01-263 0977.**

9-14 MAY Berlin. Second European Nuclear Disarmament Convention. **Contact Russell Foundation, Gamble Street, Nottingham 0602-784504.**

14 MAY 'Crusade against cruise'. Long distance march Lands End to CND festival in Exeter via Truro, Plymouth etc. Adm £2 per day waged/£1 per day unwaged. **Org SW Region CND. Contact Stephen Huggett Plymouth 268724.**

14 MAY London The Jury Today. Day conf. Spkrs Prof Michael Zander, John Freeman JP, George Carman QC, Dr Michael McConville. ULU, Malet Street, WC1. £15. **Org Univ of London Dept of Extra-Mural Studies 01-636 8000 ext 3875.**

21-22 MAY Bradford Women's Local History. *Weekend conf on themes peace & war; maternity & reproduction;* politics & parties. £6.50 waged/£3 unwaged. Creche. **Enquiries: Adult Education Centre, Bradford 487054.**

24 MAY International Women's Day for Disarmament – women's day of action and strike for disarmament. **Contact Carmel, May 24, 16 Arundel Road, Brighton 0273-604265.**

26 MAY London Public meeting Ireland & Labour. Guest Spkrs Ken Livingstone, Clive Soley. 7pm Islington Central Library, Holloway Road. **Org Islington South Labour Party.**

31 MAY-3 JUN Upper Heyford Peace Camp 4-day blockade. **Contact Sylvia 01-555 8448 (day) or Tim/Clare 01-582 7375 (eves & weekends).**

4 JUNE Leicester. Leicester Active Birth Conference. Day conference 9.30-4.30pm. £4.50/£2.50 unwaged. **Enquiries Janet Peacock 0533-766439.**

11 JUN Nottingham Association of Radical Midwives 1983 national conf. Theme: 'Education and the midwife'. Workshops & forum. Creche. Fee £8 incl refreshments & lunch. **Details: ARM Conference '83, 14 Thorn Street, Derby (SAE please).**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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BOTSWANA FIELD OFFICER

To administer the IVS Volunteer Programme in Botswana and investigate new projects in consultation with serving volunteers and local organisations. Resident in Botswana with annual visits to the UK.

Knowledge of Southern African affairs an advantage. Previous overseas experience, preferably as a volunteer essential.

Volunteer terms include: Modest salary, housing and insurance. Vehicle provided and all expenses paid. Couples job-sharing will be considered.

Closing date for applications 30 April with interviews planned for late May, leading to appointment in June or July.

Write for details including short cv and sae to:

Overseas Department,
International Voluntary Service,
BFONS, 53 Regent Road,
Leicester LE1 6YL.

WORK FOR PEACE IVS & UNDERSTANDING

Vacancy for

GENERAL SECRETARY

The General Secretary of the Society of Telecom Executives (formerly Society of Post Office Executives), a TUC-affiliate, is due to retire on 30 September, 1983 and applications are invited for the post by 6 May, 1983. The job is open to all.

Details are obtainable on written request to the General Secretary, Society of Telecom Executives, 102-104 Sheen Road, Richmond-upon-Thames, Surrey TW9 1UF, the envelope to be superscribed 'Personal'.

EDITOR

required for **'The Landworker'**, monthly newspaper of the Agricultural and Allied Workers Trade Group, T&GWU. Requirements include knowledge of Labour movement, journalistic experience and layout.

Details of salary, etc, on application to: **The Secretary (A&AWNTG), 308 Grays Inn Road, London, WC1X 8DS by 22 April.**

UNA International Service

MADAGASCAR FIELD OFFICER

to establish and administer our development programme, placing skilled personnel in community level projects. Good French is needed, a knowledge of Africa and its development problems and third world experience.

Also

Youth Worker (man)

needed for centre in capital

Appointments are for two years minimum, with modest living, accommodation and other allowances, return air fares etc.

Details and applications forms from UNAIS, 3 Whitehall Ct, London SW1. Please quote NS/2.

OV SELECTION CATERS for the more mature person as well as graduates and 'A' level students with typing and office skills. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy.) Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London, SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

Courses

ESPERANTO – the easy-to-learn, easy-to-use International language. Friday Beginners' Class starts 15 April, 6.15 p.m. London Esperanto Club, 153 Drummond St, N1. Unbeatable value at £3 for 14 lessons.

LOOKING AT LIFE through Poetry and Prose. Weekend 15-17 April. £24 (concessions). S.a.e. Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon, Wilts. Tel. 0793 771080.

WEA

MARXISM and BRITAIN 1883-1983

Residential weekend course: Hurst Court, Hastings 13-15 May, 1983

Contributors: Ben Fine, Richard Johnson, David McLellan, Ralph Miliband and Hilary Wainwright

Further details and application form from Workers' Educational Association, South Eastern District, 4 Castle Hill, Rochester, Kent Tel. Medway 42140

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"laughter, hard truth and compassion" Sun. Times
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Theatres

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WAYNE SLEEP
'The most exciting dancer in the world' with his record breaking show –
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Save £4 on a family 4-seater package of 2 adults & 2 children on Sat Mats. (selected seats only)
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TICKETS AVAILABLE TODAY
'Dash to it' D. Express.

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01-834 6177

BARBICAN THEATRE. 01-628 8795, cc 01-638 8891, 24 hr info 01-628 2295. Few day seats £4 from 10 a.m.
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
'THE TAMING OF THE SHREW' – reduced price previews to 16 April – 'elaborate, sumptuous, full of tricks' D. Tel. From 21 April 'THE ROARING GIRL' by Middleton & Dekker. THE PIT from 22 April 'THE BODY' by Nick Darke.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'The Rivals'. 'Lorenzaccio'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'A Map of the World'. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'Kick for Touch', 'The Beggar's Opera', 'Small Change'. *See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.*

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 *lines) CC. Group sales 01-379 6061. The Wells' Stagecoach:* Phone B.O. for details.
From 12 April **JOYCE TRISLER DANSCOMPANY (NEW YORK)**
'SPRING INTO DANCE': Phone 01-278 0855 (24 hours) for details of amazing cheap ticket offers!

THEATRE GOERS please note: cc – Credit cards; S – Student standby.

Meetings

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE. Sunday talks on eastern thought and spirituality in London and Bourne End. All welcome. Vedanta magazine 50p. Details: Tel. 06285 26464.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. *Sunday, 10 April 8pm.* Informal Q/A Meeting 'Life, Sleep, Death'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Concerts

QUILAPAYUN IN CONCERT FOR CHILE Solidarity Campaign. **PORTSMOUTH** 29 April, Guild Hall, (0705) 824355. **LONDON** with **BOYS OF THE LOUGH,** 1 May, Dominion Theatre, 01-580 9562. **BISTOL** 3 May, University Victoria Rooms. **SHEFFIELD** 4 May, City Hall, (0742) 735296. All tour details and tickets for London concert from C.S.C., 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7, 01-272 4298.

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